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FUNDAMENTALS OF THE FAITH

A SERIES OF STUDIES FOR CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR SOCIETIES, BIBLE CLASSES, STUDY CIRCLES, ETC.

BY

REV. ALEXANDER CLARK

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THE BRITISH CHRISTIAN ENDEAVOUR UNION
4 AVE MARIA LANE LONDON, E.C. 4.

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.

The views given in this book may not necessarily always coincide with those of the publishers, but the author being a greatly beloved and trusted evangelical leader, they have not hesitated to give him the fullest liberty of expression. They are satisfied the result has been such a presentation of the fundamentals that cannot but strengthen the faith of every young Christian who reads this book.

PREFACE.

THERE are many who say, "Who will show us the simple Gospel?" They ask a clear, concise statement of truth—truth in tabloid form, easily taken, easily digested.

Certain Jews gathered round Jesus in the Temple Cloisters with the demand, "How long dost Thou keep us in suspense? If Thou art the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus did not tell them plainly. There are things which cannot be told "plainly." "A plain truth is necessarily a small truth. It is our duty to put a thing into a nutshell—*if it is the size of a nut;* but when we try to put illimitable truth into a nutshell, we leave a good deal out" (Percy Ainsworth. *The Pilgrim Church.* p. 42).

The writer has tried to compress into a few pages the teaching of Scripture on certain great themes, not in the belief that truth can be easily mastered, but in the confidence that eager youth rejoices to see open doors through which to pass to adventure and discovery. If these chapters point the way the author will have accomplished his task.

He would gratefully acknowledge the kindness of Principal T. W. Chance, M.A., Ph.D., Cardiff Baptist College, and Professor Francis Davidson, M.A., B.D., D.D., United Original Secession Church Divinity Hall, who read most of the MS. and made useful suggestions, and to Mr. William Burt and Rev. R. J. Smithson, B.Th., Ph.D., who corrected the greater part of the proofs.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

1. Challenging Voices ... Psalm xiv. 1-7.
2. God is Personal ... ... John iv. 7-25.
3. Old Testament Vision Hosea xi. 1-12.
4. Father-Love ... ... Matthew xi. 25-30.
5. Sonship ... ... John i. 9-14.
6. Difficulties ... ... Job xxiii. 1-17.

CHAPTER I.

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD.

I.

Challenging Voices.

It is a remarkable fact that the Scriptures do not seek to prove or argue the existence of God. The world to which they were at first addressed did not demand this. The belief was natural to the human mind and common to all men. They do recognise a practical unbelief which says, "There is no God;" but this is not a denial of the existence of God so much as a hope that He will not interfere in human affairs. "The wicked saith, He will not require it. All his thoughts are, There is no God."

Nor do the Scriptures offer proof that God can reveal Himself to men, that He can be known by men. The writers knew Him, lived in fellowship with Him, had His Spirit within them. What need then of argument? Even Jesus, who claimed unique and absolute knowledge of God, assumed that God is. He rested His life, His teaching, His ministry, His sacrifice on this fundamental conviction, and that was the sole argument He offered.

Atheism. But such conviction has been challenged. The Atheist cries, "It is clear as the sun, and evident as the day, that there is no God; and still more, that there can be no God" (Fuerbach).

This is the most spacious and tremendous of negatives. As such it is necessarily and eternally incapable of proof. " It proclaims the race to be fatherless. It empties the universe of purpose. This complex web of unresting energies is a machine, not only without a maker, but without an end before it, or a mind within it." No wonder Herbert Spencer said, " The Atheistic theory is absolutely unthinkable, but, even if it were thinkable, it would not be a solution."

AGNOSTICISM. Absolute atheism is rare. Many prefer to say, " I do not know." This sounds honest and modest, and such, in some cases of doubt and fear, it is. Generally, however, it is not a doubt but a creed. " ' *Agnosticism* ' was the name invented by T. H. Huxley (under the mistaken impression that *agnosco* in Greek means " I don't know ") to describe the standpoint that all knowledge of ultimate reality is impossible." The agnostic went on, despite this, to proclaim a *First Cause*, essentially and eternally unknowable. He clothed this ' primal energy ' with attributes and qualities which left men wondering whether he was not merely dodging the use of the name *God*. Hubert L. Simpson says, " If you would travel hopefully, do not listen to the man whose ignorance is self-confessed. Ask the man on point-duty; he knows. That is why he is there."

All knowledge requires faith as a basis, faith that we can know and faith in the regularity of nature, the assumption that underlies all knowledge concerning its ways. Every scientific adventure is made in faith. " He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him " (Hebrews xi. 6).

II.

GOD IS PERSONAL.

The teaching of the Scriptures is that God is personal. By this we mean that we recognise in Him the attributes of love, goodness, and responsiveness. This is in contradistinction to the finest pagan thought of St. Paul's time. " God was the centre of all Stoic teaching, but the Stoic God was an abstract noun, the summary of all existence and of all matter . . . dreadfully impersonal " (T. R. Glover).

PANTHEISM. The God of Pantheism is really impersonal. Pantheism identifies God with the universe, identifies nature with God, and so denies the supernatural. Everything is God, and God is everything. He is one with His creation, not outside it or above it. Obviously, if everything is God, evil reveals Him as faithfully as good, cruelty as surely as pity, lust as mightily as love. There is no sin, unless God Himself be a sinner. Pantheism affords no place for worship or prayer or communion with God. If everything be God and God everything, He is nothing.

DEISM. Deism puts forward the idea that God made the world, wound it up, and set it revolving in space, then retired to His heaven, *an absentee God.* " We can hardly tolerate the local laird who lives on the Continent and leaves the castle untenanted. It is a crassly selfish manner of life. This is just where Deism hurts. There can be no revelation where there is no God in touch with His creatures. What

is the practical difference to you and to me between the two statements, " God is not here," and " There is no God ? " There is none. A Deist for all purposes of life is no more than an Atheist " (F. Davidson).

SCIENCE, once claimed by Agnosticism and Rationalism as the most helpful of allies, is steadily moving toward a spiritual interpretation of the universe. In dealing with *origins* it no longer denies *mind* in this world. Sir James Jeans declares " From the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician." Professor Eddington speaks of " the beneficent Father, without which, it seems to me, the question of the theoretical existence of a God has little significance." Granted that such conclusions are reached by other than purely scientific method, it is yet evident that they are regarded as consistent with the findings of science.

PHILOSOPHY. Philosophy too is making its contribution. Mr. Arthur Balfour (as he then was) in his Gifford Lectures on *Theism and Humanism*, delivered just before the war, pleaded for faith in God as personal. " When I speak of God, I mean something other than an Identity wherein all differences vanish . . . I mean a God whom a man can love, a God to whom men can pray, who takes sides, who has purposes and preferences, whose attributes, however conceived, leave unimpaired the possibility of a personal relation between Himself and those He has created " (p. 21).

III.

OLD TESTAMENT VISION.

The roots of Jesus' teaching about God were deep in the religion of the Jewish race. He was heir to the revelation given to the fathers. He nourished His spiritual life on the Word of God, speaking through psalmist and prophet. His mind was steeped in the Old Testament Scriptures. What was the Old Testament vision of God?

Certain features stand out clear. Against the polytheism which marred the worship of surrounding tribes and nations, it stressed the Unity of God. *God is One.* "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." Fundamental also to Old Testament thought is the Righteousness of God. *God is Holy.* The prophets came to see that this holiness is ethical, not legalistic. They proclaimed it, even when it promised most serious consequences for an unheeding and rebellious people. They had the vision of Jehovah sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up (Isaiah vi. 1), yet not remote so as to be out of touch with His creation. They taught that *God is near,* about us in time and in eternity (Psalm cxxxix. 7-11), eager to help as is a mother her children (Isaiah lxvi. 13), guiding as does a shepherd his sheep (Isaiah xl. 11; Psalm xxiii. 4).

From time to time great souls glimpsed even *the love of God.* It was as when a star swims into the horizon. The goodness and long-suffering and mercy of God were freely proclaimed, and even the thought that He is Father of Israel, the chosen people.

But few, if any, dared presume that He loved the individual Israelite. Such a conception was not native or normal to the working creed of the Jews.

IV.

FATHER-LOVE.

"When the fullness of time was come," Jesus came that He might reveal the Father. "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father," He said; "and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden" (Matthew xi. 27f). *Father* is *the* name He uses for God. So it appears in His first recorded word. The Boy of twelve years, found in the Temple by His sorrowing parents, betrayed astonishment that they should have sought Him elsewhere than in His Father's house. When speaking of His own relationship to God, He invariably uses the word Father. In each of His five recorded prayers He addresses God as Father. In the last of the seven words on the Cross He says, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

He was conscious of a unique relationship to God. He does not say *Our Father* as embracing Himself and His disciples; for He enjoyed an intimacy they could never know. "I ascend unto My Father and your Father, unto My God and your God" (John xx. 17). Other echoes of this direct personal relationship with the Father are found in Luke ii. 49, Matthew xi. 27, Luke xxii. 39, and Matthew xxvi. 39. His was

unbroken and constant communion, a fact which never obtrudes itself in the Gospels because it was His normal and natural experience.

Out of this rich experience, He spoke to men of God's Father-love for them. He made the least worthy feel that God is kin, that He is interested, that He cares, that He is near. He taught that God loves His world "down to the last little sparrow in the nestful." Fatherhood is more than Creatorship and Providence; it is love that embraces "the unthankful and the evil," love that pursues sinful men to the farthest reach of their wanderings.

The Father-love of God is demonstrated supremely in the teaching of Jesus in the *Parable of the Prodigal Son.* Here the revelation is not a Fatherhood of Nature but a Fatherhood of Grace. It was given to justify Jesus' reception of publicans, who were rated no better than Gentiles. It reveals that man by his distrust and disobedience is lost to God; being lost to God, he is missed by God. The love of God is toward the erring one. There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth. "The first and best gift of God's Fatherhood in the teaching of Jesus is His *forgiveness of sin.*" His will is to bring the outcast home.

V.

SONSHIP.

In the strange perverseness of their hearts, some would turn this very message of God's love to their own undoing. Setting logic above life, they say that

if God be Creator, then all men are His creatures; if God be Father, then all are His children. Jesus did not address all men as "sons of God." "God is always the Father, and the Father of all, for He is always what He ought to be . . . But with men it is not so."

The prodigal who knows himself is ready to say, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son." His sonship by nature might well be the measure of his condemnation; since he has spurned such love and generous provision. Jesus saw man estranged from God—openly wandering and in the far country, spending his life in riotousness, or as 'the elder brother,' even more rebellious against Divine love and grace than the prodigal who knew nothing of his pride of heart and achievement. Sonship, in the deepest sense of that word, was forfeited.

This mattered so much to the Father that His outgoing love took the initiative. He gave His only begotten Son to seek and save that which is lost. This meant Calvary, where alone the Father-love of God can be understood. The new and living way was opened up for the prodigal's return. The tragedy is that while God wills to save and bless all men, all will not come for salvation and blessing. The Parable of the Prodigal itself closes with a son outside on the door step. "He would not go in."

VI.

DIFFICULTIES.

H. G. Wood, in his "*Christianity and the Nature of History*," says, "No ultimate belief is likely to be free from difficulties and objections, and the difficulties and objections attaching to different ultimate beliefs must be honestly met." Many find it hard to believe that God is Father, that God is love.

Some of the discoveries of modern Science have dazzled and overawed the human mind. Man himself has been described as "a parasite infesting the epidermis of a midge among the planets" (Cabell). Those who are hypnotized by vastness, or humbled by the microscopic, whose values are only the quantitative, cannot help wondering whether God can have any regard for the aforesaid "parasite." But those who realise that a soul may outweigh a world—and that is what Jesus taught—take heart and hope, and return to the revelation of God as Father, given in and by Christ Jesus our Lord.

The problem of suffering, sorrow and sin makes it difficult for others to reach the conviction that God is Father. The War with its waste and terror, its mental and moral confusion, and its throw-back to jungle habits and morality, led many to doubt that a God of love lives and rules. Similar test of faith has occurred where poverty has made life mere struggle for existence, where illness has crippled the bread-winner, or sin has blighted the home. Men cry out, "Why is evil permitted in a world where God is

love?" This is the most impenetrable problem human speculation has to pierce. The only answer is the faith that there is an answer and that God knows it.

It was not because Jesus was ignorant of, or indifferent to human suffering and need, or because He explained away the reality of human pain or sin, that He taught men to turn to God as Father. None fathomed these depths as He did. It was His certainty in the Fatherhood of God that gave Him strength to see things through. He concentrated His efforts on the problem at the heart of every human problem—the problem of sin. He gave His life "for the remission of sins." In so doing He has shown us the Father. And they who rest their weary souls and distraught minds on Him will know themselves His children, and meet life with the same peace and power which Jesus revealed on His way to the Cross.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

1.	FACT NOT MYTH ...	Mark vi. 1-6.
2.	FIRST IMPRESSIONS	Matthew xvi. 13-20.
3.	THE CLAIMS OF JESUS	Luke ix. 18-22; 57-62.
4.	EARLY PREACHING ...	Acts iv. 1-13.
5.	THE INCARNATION	Philippians ii. 1-11.
6.	THE EVER-LIVING ...	Hebrews xiii. 7-17.

CHAPTER II.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

I.

FACT, NOT MYTH.

We approach this study by the gateway of history. Another door opens, inviting us to *the Land of Myth;* its porter cries, " Lo, Christ is here ! " There they will tell us that Jesus never lived, that folk-lore has built its inverted pyramid on some tiny pebble of fact. " No historian of the least repute has committed himself to this theory " (T. R. Glover). The ' Christ-myth' of Strauss no longer appeals to the serious student ; only the Christ of the Gospels. These Gospels have been tried in the seven times heated furnace of historic criticism, and have been proved to be finest gold. They constitute an authentic record of One who lived at a definite time in the annals of the race, in an obscure country on the shores of the Mediterranean. Yet the most striking characteristics of this Figure are His timelessness and His universality. The march of progress has not left Him behind. In every generation, men have known and loved Him. Not only the Gospels, but the history of the Christian Church, offer testimony enough that Jesus is no myth, but a historic and ever-living Personality.

Let us try to see Jesus as those saw Him who were closest to Him. To them He was *essentially human.* He was truly man, participating in a real human

experience. His neighbours and friends in Nazareth knew Him as the Carpenter; they were acquainted with His brothers and sisters; Mary, His mother, was a familiar figure. When He left Nazareth, He was without the ordinary means of authority—money, higher education, social prestige; yet men felt the attraction of His personality. The multitudes followed Him; a band of men at His call rose up, left all, and became His disciples.

II.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

How may we account for such whole-hearted devotion? In three ways Jesus impressed men.

(1) *By His Words.* He spake as never man spake. He taught with authority, and not as the Scribes. He came not to destroy but to fulfil all partial revelation, including the Jewish law. He made men to hear the voice of the living God in the Law. On his lips the words of the prophets took on new meaning and urgency. His language was simplicity itself; the common people heard Him gladly. His parables were drawn from the every-day life of ordinary folk. The more they pondered His teaching, so simple and profound, the more were the disciples convinced that He had the words of eternal life.

(2) *By His Works.* The multitudes were arrested by the works of Jesus, by the sympathy and grace which these expressed. His miracles of healing, so tender, immediate, and complete, were "signs," revealing more than human love and power. His

authority over evil spirits released men from unreasoning fears of a demonic world. He was in tune with Nature, which also responded to His bidding; "even the winds and the sea obeyed Him." His miracles were evidence of a Love that sought to redeem human life from all evil.

(3) *By His Character.* What Jesus was spoke louder than what He said or did. His disciples, who continued with Him in His temptations, had opportunities of intimacy. They never found Him falter or fail. His was not the sinlessness of untried innocence; it was holiness which is the fruit of hard-won victory. His moral courage impressed His followers, the more so as it was allied to a meekness under provocation, seldom found in the brave. His radiant optimism, born of faith in a Heavenly Father's love, shocked conventional religion by its confidence in the salvability of the worst, even the publicans and sinners. There came a moment when the gathering conviction of the disciples found expression. At Cæsarea Philippi, the Master discussed with them the verdict of public opinion about Himself. Then He asked, "And whom say *ye* that I am?" Simon answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus saw evidence in this confession that the finger of God had burst the dam of disciple reserve. "With the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

III.

THE CLAIMS OF JESUS.

The faith of the disciples was challenged and strengthened by the claims of Jesus expressed in two great titles of which He made frequent use. His common name for Himself, a name never used by the disciples or by the Evangelists, was '*the Son of Man.*' On the lips of Ezekiel, this phrase indicated one who in spite of human weakness was chosen for the service of Jehovah. In the vision of Daniel, and, in the later teaching of Enoch, the name points to a Messiah, supernatural in origin, universal in dominion, appointed Judge of all the earth. This was lost sight of by the Jews in the time of Christ.

As He used it, the title had its Messianic significance (Matthew ii. 10; xvi. 28; xxvi. 24, etc.). The Divine ideal of humanity was realised; the truly representative Man was come. Jesus employed the title generally in one of two connections—when referring to His humiliation or to His exaltation. *The Son of Man* hath not where to lay His head (Luke ix. 58), yet He hath power on earth to forgive sins (Luke v. 24). *The Son of Man* must suffer many things and be rejected . . . and be killed, and the third day be raised up (Luke ix. 22); and He is to judge the world (Matthew xxvi. 64). Two streams of prophecy unite in this title; the one concerning the Messiah and the other concerning the Suffering Servant of Jehovah.

Another title on the lips of Jesus was "*the Son*

of God." This appears most frequently in the Gospel according to St. John, but not there only. It occurs, in one form or other, some thirty-six times in the other Gospels. As a Messianic title, it signifies exceptional dignity of nature (Matthew xvi. 16; xxvi. 63f), and "a perfect oneness of thought, will, aim, sentiment, purpose, between the Father and the Son—entire moral and spiritual unity." (Orr). Jesus used it to express the consciousness He had of a unique filial relation to God.

When He was baptized, the announcement by "a voice out of the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," gave the Baptist to know that Jesus was the Christ, and gave significance to the subsequent Temptation in the Wilderness. The unique relation between the Son and the Father is clear in Matthew xi. 27 and in Mark xiii. 32. The Parable of the Husbandmen (Mark xii. 6) distinguishes between "My Son" and all other messengers. The title "*Son of God*" implies eternal and essential relationship.

By other claims equally impressive Jesus created in the minds of His followers the conviction that He is "Lord and God." He spake of Himself as greater than Solomon and the Temple. Although David's Son, He is David's Lord. He brooks no rival—"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." His blood seals the New Covenant between God and man; He gives His life a ransom for many. He said, "None knoweth the Father save He to whom the Son willeth to reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This is either

the mad egotism of an Impostor or the voice of the Son of God. Nineteen centuries of Christian experience witness to the reality of Jesus' claim.

IV.

EARLY PREACHING.

Further evidence as to the unique Sonship of Jesus may be found in the preaching of the early Church. The fact that the Apostles were found preaching after the death of Christ is itself of tremendous significance, for the crucifixion of their Lord left them broken men. Their faith fell to zero point. The rejection of Jesus, the trials, the cross, found them quite unprepared. In their vain hopes, they were proof against all the warnings of the Master. Calvary meant for them the failure and defeat of Jesus of Nazareth, and their own failure, for had they not all forsaken Him and fled?

Yet they are found preaching. Devotion has ousted despair, courage cowardice. Radiant and confident, they challenge the Jewish rulers and the Gentile world, sure that they have the Gospel the world needs. They explain the change by reference to an empty tomb and to contacts with a living Christ. His appearances ended with the Ascension, which was followed by the coming of the Holy Spirit, who illumined mind and inspired heart. Now they preach Christ in the very city where He was condemned and crucified.

This early preaching proclaims Him to be " Lord of all," " ordained of God to be the Judge of the quick and the dead." In His name, and through belief

in Him alone, men can receive remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost. The martyr Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God and *prayed to Him.* Prayer to Jesus became a practice of the early Church. Men were baptized into His name. In worship and in evangelism the highest honours were ascribed to Him.

> " Crown Him the Lord of life,
> Who triumphed o'er the grave,
> And rose victorious in the strife
> For those He came to save."

The outstanding convert of those days was Saul of Tarsus. " And last of all, as to one of untimely birth, He appeared to me also," was his confession. What broke down the hostility of the persecutor was the discovery that Jesus of Nazareth was the risen and exalted Christ. The resurrection was the determining factor. Thenceforth " he preached Christ in the synagogues that He is the Son of God." He wrote to the Romans " concerning His Son, who . . . was decisively proved by His Resurrection to be the Son of God—I mean concerning Jesus Christ our Lord " (Romans xiii. 5, Weymouth).

V.

THE INCARNATION.

It fell to Paul to offer the first reasoned statement concerning the Incarnation. By " *the Incarnation* " we mean that the Son came in the flesh and taber-

nacled among us—that is St. John's way of putting it; that God was in Christ—that is St. Paul's way. Paul regarded this event as the climax of human history, for which all before was but preparation; "In the fullness of time God sent forth His Son, born of a woman." His birth was a "coming;" the language pre-supposes pre-existence. "He, though He was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might become rich." In Philippians ii. 5-11, he describes, as far as it is humanly possible, the self-emptying of our Lord. He "emptied Himself" and took upon Him the nature of a slave, and even then humbled Himself and stooped to die, to die on a cross. Wherefore, God highly exalted Him.

Round the phrase, "He emptied Himself," there has waged much controversy. To become subject to the limitations of our humanity Jesus not merely laid aside the robes of majesty, the glory of His equality with the Father, He emptied *Himself*, laid aside powers and attributes. On earth He was not omnipotent; there were occasions on which He could do no mighty works (Mark vi. 5). He was not omniscient. He did not hesitate to ask for information, He confessed His ignorance as to a very important matter (Mark xiii. 32). As a child He grew in wisdom, just as He grew in stature, and in favour with God and man. He had, however, unerring insight into the hearts of men, and a sure grasp of the Divine purpose and plan; that because He lived in conscious communion and unbroken fellowship with the Father. D. W. Forrest has wisely said, "We are a thousandfold more likely to err in ascribing to Him

in His own sphere too little knowledge than too much." The essential Deity of Jesus is not to be judged by our standards of omnipotence or omniscience, but by His revelation of the Divine nature—" God is love."

The Gospels tell of *the Virgin Birth*, probably from testimony of Mary and Joseph. The character of the narratives, their beauty, purity, freedom from vulgarity and idle curiosity, goes to strengthen faith. It is almost inconceivable that the disciples would have risked the priceless treasure of the Gospel by preaching the supernatural birth of our Lord, had they not been able to offer convincing evidence. The Bishop of Birmingham, himself a scientist of no mean order, writes, " I will merely say that there are stronger arguments for it as a biological possibility than most of my correspondents realise." It should not be thought a thing incredible that the Son of God should become truly man in a way which is unique.

VI.

THE EVER-LIVING.

Two other New Testament writers dwell largely on the thought of the Deity of Christ. *The Epistle to the Hebrews* was written as a word of exhortation to Christians who had begun to wonder whether the new religion could really supersede the ancient Divinely-given religion of the Jews. The writer contrasts the Old Covenant with the New. The pre-eminence of Christ is expressed in one sentence—He is the Son of God (i. 2 ; iv. 14 ; v. 8, etc.). As Son

He is Creator, Sustainer and Heir of all things. Having made this clear, the writer dwells almost entirely on His life, work and exaltation as man. " It is an impressive fact of early Church history, that as soon as men could collect their thoughts about Him, they were much more inclined to deny the manhood which He had lived among them than the deity they had spiritually known " (H. M. Gwatkin). He who bore the name Jesus was made like His brethren in all things; He had to conquer human weakness, and learn the hard lesson of obedience to God's will. He differed from them but in one thing; He always conquered; He was without sin. He became the first-born of many sons who shall be led to glory. He became our High Priest; He opened a way of access into the Divine presence which can never again be closed (vi. 20; x. 19, 20). He has passed into the heaven and is beyond the reach of sin and death. He ever liveth to make intercession for the transgressor. He shall appear unto salvation for them that await Him (ix. 28).

The Gospel according to St. John was written " that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in His name " (xx. 31). The material selected gives insight to those denied open vision. Jesus is come as the Word (*Logos*), the personal Wisdom and Power of God, His Agent in Creation; He assumed our human nature, and dwelt for a space with men. He revealed to men the glory of His person, and gave them to understand the invisible God as never before—" He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." The only source of life and light, He is the object of saving

faith, the occasion of the world's unbelief. Unbelief took its downward course issuing in the Crucifixion; faith held its upward way till it reached the commanding confession of Thomas, "My Lord and my God." The Gospel—like the Epistles of St. John and the Apocalypse—leaves us the vision of the ever-living Christ, who alone can say of Himself, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst." In the *Book of Revelation* no imagery is too wonderful to describe the glory of the Risen Lord, as it burst upon the Seer of Patmos. He is Lord of lords and King of kings; the First and the Last. To Him is committed the unfolding of the book of human destiny, the waging of the final conflict with evil. His work in the redemption of man by the sacrifice of Himself is ever before us, "the Lamb that hath been slain from the foundation of the world." He is the Lord of all perfected life to which men may come by faith in Him.

We approached this study by the gateway of history. We find Christ in the present as in the past. The final evidence as to His Deity for any man is that which has its confirmation in experience. They who can say with the Apostle Paul, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," will need no other argument. Spiritual truth is spiritually discerned. Let the seeker take the risks of the adventure we call faith; let him trust Christ with his life; and ere long he will cry with another of old, "My Lord and my God."

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

1.	THE TRINITY	Jude xvii. 25.
2.	THE SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT ...	Isaiah xl. 6-17.
3.	IN THE LIFE OF JESUS ...	Luke iv. 1-15.
4.	PENTECOST	Acts ii. 1-21.
5.	FUNCTION	John xvi. 12-14.
6.	SPHERE :—	
	The World ...	John xvi. 7-11.
	The Church ...	Ephesians iv. 1-7.
	The Believer ...	Galatians v. 17-26.

CHAPTER III.

THE HOLY SPIRIT.

I.

THE TRINITY.

In his pilgrimage towards knowledge and wisdom man has come to what understanding he has of God by stages. Light has been given as the eye has been able to bear it, truth as the mind has been able to receive it. The religious development of Israel is virtually a development of the idea of God. The songs of a nation mirror its thought and aspirations and ideals. The Psalms reflect Israel's vision of God—Jehovah is Lord of the world, above all kings and gods, Creator and Guide of His people. He is slow to anger and plenteous in mercy, but He will punish the wicked, be they heathen oppressors or Hebrew apostates. Israel's vision may be summed up in the word—*God above man.*

The coming of Jesus made further advance into light possible. He taught clearly what psalmist and prophet had seen but faintly, that God is Father; His sovereignty is the sovereignty of Love. What Jesus was spoke even more loudly than what He taught. One who companied with Him wrote "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). The death and resurrection of Jesus brought the

disciples fuller knowledge of the wonder of His personality. When they came to interpret what they had seen and heard, this was the burden of their testimony, Jesus, *God with us.*

There was a sentence in the table-talk of Jesus on the night of His betrayal that must have lingered with His disciples: "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send Him unto you" (John xvi. 7). A bigger experience awaited them, a more intimate fellowship with the Divine than *God above* them, or *God with* them, the realisation of *God within them.* This would be possible through the coming of the Holy Spirit, the Promise of the Father, the Gift of the Son.

This brings us to the doctrine of *the Trinity.* "The intellect is indeed inevitably and rightly baffled by the relationship with one another of what we call, with stumbling and feeble lips, the three Persons of the one God. Indeed, that very sentence reveals the pitiful inadequacy of any words as symbols of this tremendous mystery." So said the Archbishop of Canterbury, adding, however, that in our prayer-life we best come to understand—a hint that the problem is theoretical rather than practical. The early Church found little difficulty. There is no such word as *Trinity* in Apostolic preaching. "The spiritual and practical interest was at the front. Belief in the Father, Son and Spirit, all Divine, was light, not darkness to the eyes of the early Christians... The Divine Son had been among them, the Divine Spirit dwelt in them, and by both the Divine Father

was made real to them. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and God by the Spirit was revealing Himself and giving life to men. That was their Trinity" (W. N. Clarke. *Outlines of Christian Theology*. p. 165).

With the uprising of pernicious heresies there came the need of formulating doctrine. But how could the finite mind grasp and express the infinite reality behind the baptismal formula (Matthew xxviii. 19), or the benediction (2 Corinthians xiii. 14), or the wealth of material which the teaching of Jesus, the records of the Gospels, Epistles and Apocalypse afford? It was not, it never can be, easy. Against two errors in thought we must be on our guard. When we say, "There are three *persons* in the Godhead," we do not mean three *individuals*. On the other hand, Father, Son and Spirit mean something more than *aspects*, or modes of Divine revelation. The Christian thought is that there are distinctions in the Godhead—love implies relationships. The true doctrine is given by Jesus Himself, when He explains His relation to the Father—"in respect of being and dignity, 'I and the Father are one;' in respect of manifestation in the work of redemption, 'my Father is greater than I.'" We have the essential Trinity when the Word is shown to be God from the beginning and with God, and when the Spirit that searches the deep things of God is also acknowledged to be God. By way of illustration, Dante suggests the rainbow, its reflection and radiance; Langland, in *Piers Plowman's Vision*, the human hand—fist, palm and fingers. Augustine said, "Go to the Jordan, and thou wilt see the Trinity." Jude says: Pray

in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God, and look for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ (verse 21). That way lies discovery.

II.

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The third Person in the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the Spirit is prominent in the Old Testament. The original word *Spirit* means *breath ;* the breath, being the sign of life, was judged to be the energising principle, of which the origin is God. The Spirit of God is God exerting power, God efficient in the physical and moral spheres.

He is the Divine energy in *Creation.* When the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, the Spirit was brooding upon the face of the waters, as a bird upon its nest, to generate and maintain life at the Divine word of command (Genesis i. 2). God breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul (Genesis ii. 7). His gifts and endowments are from the Spirit: Othniel (Judges iii. 10), Gideon (vi. 34), Jephthah (xi. 29), Samson (xiv. 6), Saul (1 Samuel ii. 6)—these *mighty men* were all acted upon by the Spirit, hence their valiant deeds. The skilled craftsman and the artist had their power from the Spirit; concerning Bezaleel it is written (Exodus xxxi. 3ff), " I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of *workmanship,* to devise skilful works." Intellectual

powers are regarded as the product of God's Spirit. " There is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty giveth them understanding " (Job xxxii. 8).

The prophets were conscious of the Spirit's power within them. Amos the herdsman, practical and unemotional, Isaiah the statesman watching over the fortunes of the nation, Jeremiah, shrinking and shy yet magnificently courageous, proclaiming the New Covenant, knew themselves to be inspired. Ezekiel, in the vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, sees that national revival can be only by the same Spirit. It is to *Messiah* that the gifts of the Spirit are to come in their fullness. " And the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Jehovah "(Isaiah xi. 2f). In the latter days men came to see that the Spirit is the *Holy Spirit*. " They rebelled and grieved His Holy Spirit " (Isaiah lxiii. 10) ; " Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm li. 11); the thought here is the Spirit that makes for holiness—the clean heart and the steadfast spirit.

There was little thought of the Spirit as personal. The doctrine of the Trinity is Christian, not Jewish. As the oak lies in the acorn, so the truth may be found in the Old Testament, but it required Pentecost to liberate and fructify it. The Old Testament thought is, God in action. The Spirit is the Divine influence upon man, the Divine energy in man.

III.

IN THE LIFE OF JESUS.

So it is in the beautiful stories of *the Incarnation.* "The power of the Most High" overshadowed "the highly favoured" among women; "Holy Spirit" came upon her; God's spiritual energy fitted her for her unique function in human history (Luke i. 35). In *the Baptism* "the Holy Spirit descended in a bodily form, as a dove, upon Him" (Luke iii. 22), marking the official beginning of His ministry, as when a king is anointed; perhaps illuminating and completing His growing consciousness of His relations to God and to man; certainly enduing Him with the power which became the subject of the intense spiritual conflict which ensued. Mark, in his narrative of *the Temptation* says, "And straightway the Spirit driveth Him forth into the wilderness." From that stern fight He returned conqueror "in the power of the Spirit." He announced His mission first in Nazareth, in the words of Isaiah lxi. 1ff., "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor . . ." *His preaching* was to the common people "new teaching," full of grace, yet vibrant with authority. By the Spirit of God He cast out demons. To ascribe this power to Beelzebub, as the Pharisees did, was to blaspheme the Spirit of God (Matthew xii. 22-32). The Spirit co-operated with His sinless spirit in the self-offering for sin which He made upon *the Cross* (Hebrews ix. 14); "Through an eternal spirit He

offered Himself to God." "The sacrifice of the Cross was consummated by an act of our Lord's own spirit, which was so penetrated and elevated by the Spirit of God, that it lived in the eternal and invisible, and was able to 'endure the cross, despising the shame.'" (Swete.) After His resurrection Jesus commissioned His disciples, giving them commandment "through the Holy Spirit." He bade them wait at Jerusalem until they were clothed with power from on high (Luke xxiv. 49). With symbolical action, reminiscent of the Creation story, "*He breathed on them*, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost!" "What Jesus gives them is not a simple promise, but neither is it the fullness of the Spirit; it is *an earnest*. Raised Himself to a degree of higher life, He hastes to make them sharers in it as far as that is possible." (Godet).

IV.

PENTECOST.

The Spirit was given in fullness at Pentecost. One hundred and twenty disciples, men and women, gathered in the early morning for fellowship in thought and prayer. "Suddenly there came a sound from heaven like a violent blast of wind, which filled the whole house where they were seated. They saw tongues like flames distributing themselves, one resting on the head of each, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit—they began to speak in foreign tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to express themselves" (Acts ii. 2ff. Moffatt).

E. Stanley Jones (*The Christ of Every Road*, p. 48), says, not without reason, that " the wrappings of the Gift have seriously affected its wide acceptance. They seem to have called attention away from the central fact—finding God in transforming intimacy and power." Yet even the wrappings have a value. The gale that first filled the House of Prayer, then swept on over the face of the earth with life-giving power; what could more fittingly express " the Breath of God " ? Jesus Himself found analogy between the wind that bloweth where it listeth and the action of the Spirit. Nicodemus, if present in the Upper Room, would well remember this (John iii. 8). And the something that looked like fire, distributing itself in tongues of flame, one to each believer present, what could better recall to the Baptist's disciples his significant words, " I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me . . . shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire " (Matthew iii. 11) ? The vision of fire would awaken memories, too, of the Burning Bush, the fiery mountain, and the accepted sacrifice on Carmel's height—all eloquent of the Presence of God, now come in penetrating, purifying grace and power.

" There is no historical statement in the New Testament which is more difficult to interpret than St. Luke's account of the Pentecostal *gift of tongues*," says H. B. Swete (*The Holy Spirit in the New Testament*, p. 72).

" Are we to understand that the newly-baptized brotherhood found themselves able with quickened powers of utterance to use either Aramaic or Greek, so that they could reach the whole of the pilgrims

from East and West?" He examines the evidence carefully, and concludes, "*The purpose* of the miracle, if it is to be regarded in that light, was not to lighten the labour of the Christian missionary, but to call attention at the first outset to the advent of the Paraclete, to demonstrate the reality of the Heavenly gift, and to symbolize the vanishing of racial distinctions before the progress of a catholic church."

Pentecost was a day when *barriers fell.* The distinction between "sacred" and "secular" disappeared when the mighty rushing wind filled the house before it touched the temple. The claims of a special priesthood appeared ridiculous, when the Spirit of God took up humble men and women for His purposes. To the Jew it must have seemed strange that women should have received the Holy Spirit, but had not one of them, "highly favoured," already received God the Son? Old men and young men, free men and slaves—male and female, all had the Spirit outpoured upon them. No barrier seemed strong enough to withstand the wind and the flame that were loosed on earth that day.

So much, in brief, for "wrappings" and results. What was the experience itself? What was *the* miracle of Pentecost? Judge of it by Peter. He is a new man. Cowardice has taken flight from his soul. Not only has he wonderful fluency of speech before the critical mob; he has a courage, wisdom and skill, an insight into the Person and Work of Christ, that we have never seen before. He represented the eleven, who were transformed as he was. *His* explanation was, "having been by the right hand of God lifted up, and having received from the Father

the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured forth this which ye both see and hear" (Acts ii. 33). The Spirit of God, who in Old Testament times was a Divine communication to the saints, was in these men a personal Presence; received of old for special and well-defined purposes He was now given for all life and action. "The anointing which ye have received from Him abideth in you" (1 John ii. 20, 27). The Holy Spirit came at Pentecost as the Spirit of the glorified Lord, in full exercise and manifestation of His power. That is the first meaning of Pentecost.

V.

FUNCTION.

When we ask, What is the Work of the Holy Spirit? we are faced with the difficulty that the New Testament offers no systematic statement, no scientific treatment, of the subject. The reason is, as Dr. Denney says, "To the men who wrote the New Testament and to those for whom they wrote, the Spirit was *not a doctrine but an experience;* they did not speak of *believing* in the Holy Spirit, but of *receiving* the Holy Spirit when they believed" (Acts xix. 2). Yet, surveying the nature and field of the Spirit's activities, we find one purpose stands out clear and plain.

Let us recall that the Spirit is not simply a Gift from Christ, but the Spirit and Life of Christ imparted to the believer. He comes not as an independent authority to take the place of the Risen Christ and to carry out a work of His own. He is one with the

Father and the Son, co-operating in the great plan of salvation. The selflessness of the Spirit's ministry is shown by Jesus. *He shall not speak of Himself.* His teaching is the perfect expression of the one will of God. " He shall testify of Me " (John xv. 26); " He shall glorify Me " (John xvi. 14).

The need for such witness, for such continuous interpretation in the experience of men, is evident, when we consider the life and work of Christ. " Jesus is greater than His words. When the time comes for Him to leave His disciples, many things remain unuttered. Many things are involved in His presence in the world, and especially in His impending passion, which He understands, but they do not and cannot; are these things to be lost for ever? Is the significance of Jesus to be so far thrown away? " (Denney). The Spirit comes to make Christ—His Person, work and teaching—real to men; *He is come to glorify Christ*, by taking of that which is His, to declare it and to carry it to its triumphant issue.

The test therefore of the Spirit-filled life and of the Spirit-inspired message lies not in its ecstasies or enthusiasms, in its evidences of " gifts "—tongues healing, or the like; these can be all too easily simulated; still less is it to be found in the spirit which has pride in its spiritual powers; it is found in effective witness to Christ, in a mind illuminated, in a heart consecrated, in a life which increasingly mirrors His glory.

VI.

THE SPHERE.

The Sphere of the Spirit's operations is threefold—the world, the church and the believer.

(*a*) *The World.*

He is at work in creative activity often *unrecognized* by those who make much of the doctrine. A recent writer says, "We must include within the range of the operations of the Holy Spirit all the scientist's quest for truth, and all discovery of it, all æsthetic experience, all moral endeavour. Another affirms, "The Spirit assuredly uses other instruments —the League of Nations, a Disarmament Conference, a Slum Clearance Committee." In attributing to the Spirit of God, however, the initiative and inspiration of all true scientific, social and moral progress, it must be remembered that this is not His supreme manifestation.

Jesus said, "And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John xvi. 8f). "Of *sin*, because they believe not on Me"—His work is directed toward the human conscience; it is inward and thorough. He convicts not so much by invective or denunciation, as by the power of life touched by His glory. The ultimate sin is the refusal to believe in Christ; that is the choice of darkness, or the choice of the second-best (if even that) in preference to God's Best.

" Of *righteousness*, because I go unto My Father." The Resurrection and Ascension were indisputable proof that Jesus loved and spoke the truth when He claimed to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world. Not until He was risen and returned to the Father did men realise the wonder of His life on earth—His constant victory over sin, His unbroken fellowship with God, His boundless love for all. Life which so lifted righteousness out of imperfect creed into perfect deed must for ever carry conviction.

" Of *Judgment*, because the prince of this world hath been judged "—The Cross was the world's crisis. The World thought to judge and cast out Christ; it stands convicted and condemned. We see at Calvary, as nowhere else, sin exposed and judged. So long as the Spirit keeps alive the memory of the " green hill far away," the world cannot but be restless in its sin, and that because it is not God-forsaken ; His Spirit still strives with men.

(*b*) *The Church.*

The Promise of the Spirit was to the disciples as a company, the Pentecost experience to the fellowship in the Upper Room. As the Church grew, and social differences, class distinctions and vanity of gifts became apparent, *effective unity* seemed imperilled. But the Church was one, the temple of God wherein He dwells (2 Corinthians vi. 16; Ephesians ii. 21; 1 Timothy iii. 15; 1 Peter ii. 5), the Body of Christ, of which as Head He is Ruler, Saviour, Nourisher (Ephesians v. 22; Colossians ii. 19). This unity does not degenerate into uniformity; " there are

diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; differences of administration, but the same Lord; diversities of operations, but the same God which worketh all in all." The key to the longed-for unity of the Christian Church to-day is the recognition of the place and ministry of the Holy Spirit in her midst.

The Church's *primary duty* is to witness to Christ. For the disciples this meant something more than mere reminiscences of what they had seen and heard in the days of His flesh. It required interpretation of the facts, and the application of them as a Gospel. In seeking the fuller knowledge of the meaning of His Person, teaching and work, they had the Holy Spirit as their Guide into all truth. By His inspiration they gave the world the New Testament. What mental quickening and spiritual illumination the Gospels show, and what insight into the mysteries of Divine truth the Epistles! A discriminating Spirit has been at work in selection, a co-ordinating Spirit in arrangement, and a passionate Spirit in the witness of the New Testament Scriptures.

The policy of the Church was at the Spirit's direction. Stephen was called to office because "he was a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost." The New Testament mentions ministries of many kinds, some of which exhausted themselves in the apostolic or sub-apostolic age; but this they had in common, they were the expression of special gifts of the Holy Spirit. It was by the urge of the Holy Spirit that Peter opened the Kingdom to the Gentiles, and again by the urge of the Spirit that the Church at Antioch set apart Barnabas and Saul for pioneer work. The missionaries were conscious of His leading,

sometimes bidding, sometimes forbidding. They and the Church were extraordinarily responsive to His guidance. So the Church extended and conquered.

(*c*) *The Believer.*

The Spirit's work in the Church and in the World is directly or indirectly through consecrated human life. His Presence and Power have been readily recognised in those of outstanding gifts and vocations. *Prophecy* had an extraordinary revival in the early Church. A special form of prayer, known as "*speaking with a tongue*," broke through ordinary forms of speech, as it directed the speaker's mind towards God (1 Corinthians xiv. 2, 28). *The worker of miracles*, whose service lay in the healing of the sick and in casting out demons, was a Spirit-controlled man. Such illumination and inspiration were exceptional and much coveted. The doctrine that they are the normal expression and best gifts of the Spirit is unscriptural (1 Corinthians xii. 29ff.).

There is no attempt to explain *how* the Spirit of God normally acts upon the spirit of man, but certain facts are acknowledged and emphasised. The Spirit creates man anew; without such *renewal* none can see or enter the Kingdom of God. The whole range of life, physical, mental and spiritual, is brought by the Spirit into conformity with the perfect pattern shown in Jesus Christ. *The body*, as an essential part of personality, becomes the temple of the Holy Ghost. Bodily acts are therefore of tremendous moment. *The mind*, as the natural

faculty of conscious knowledge and reflection, is illuminated by the Spirit and directed into all truth. *The spirit*, as the Christian's renewed and regenerate nature, is indwelt by the Spirit of God, who delivers it from the law of sin and death. By raising man to his true life the Spirit leads him out of bondage into *freedom*. He imparts to him of His best gifts—those that are to be really coveted—faith, hope, and love, which abide.

On its active side the Christian life is " walking after the Spirit." *Its strength* lies in the power which fellowship with the Spirit brings. It is the Spirit within us who lifts us to the sweet intimacy which is in the word, " Abba-Father." He also " helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what prayers to offer nor in what way to offer them. But the Spirit Himself pleads for us in yearnings that can find no words, and the Searcher of hearts knows what the Spirit's meaning is, because His intercessions for God's people are in harmony with God's will " (Romans viii. 26f Weymouth). Life indwelt by the Spirit will bear *the fruit* of the Spirit (Galatians v. 22), and will be the agency by which God moves in the Church and in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT IS MAN?"

1.	WHAT IS MAN? ...	Psalm viii.
2.	WHENCE CAME MAN? ...	Acts xvii. 22-31.
3.	HIS INSIGNIFICANCE ...	Psalm xc.
4.	HIS INFINITE PRECIOUSNESS	Matthew vi. 25-34.
5.	THE DIVIDED SELF ...	Romans vii. 7-25.
6.	A SINNER—LOST ...	Luke xv.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT IS MAN?

I.

WHAT IS MAN?

BODY. To the Psalmist's question, "What is man?" there have been many answers. We know each other mainly through the visible organism which we call *the body*. The more a man studies the body, the more will he realise with the Psalmist

"the awful wonder of my birth,
Thy work is wonderful" (Psalm cxxxix. 14).

"The mechanism by which the heart's beat controls the flow of the blood; the devices employed to keep the temperature steady when the surrounding atmosphere is varying from hour to hour; the action of the lungs in purifying the blood supply of the system;" each of these is sufficiently wonderful to give a thinking man to pause, and to make him judge that Brother Ass, as the body has been significantly called, has been worthy of better treatment than the "saints" have sometimes meted out to him, though not of the deification to which he has been raised in modern paganism.

MIND. But man is more than body, more than animal. There is in him an element that weighs, selects and judges—*the mind*. This is not to be confused with the Brain which is its mechanism. It is other than the nervous energy which it uses up. It is roused into action by our needs—want sharpens our

wits by our ambitions—the passion for self-realisation, and by our curiosity—the desire to know Why? To this side of our nature belong memory, imagination, understanding and will. Mind has the power of reflecting upon the course of its ideas. It is conscious of itself. It appreciates the thoughts of others conveyed by gesture, or by the written or spoken word.

In the Old Testament the word "*heart*" is often used where we should use the word "mind," to represent the mental and moral activity of man. The word "mind" comes into use in the New Testament, chiefly in contrast to "the flesh"—the sinful principle in human nature, and in contrast to "the spirit"—man's higher faculty by which he recognises the will of God for life. The mind stands between the flesh and the spirit; it may be dragged down by the flesh until it becomes "a mind of the flesh," or upraised by the spirit until it becomes "a mind of the spirit."

SPIRIT. We have mentioned the word *spirit*. There is in all of us that which leaps out towards the unseen and eternal. It accounts for much of our poetry, music and art. Its highest function, according to the writers of the New Testament, is that of communion with God. "Religion is by a Divine necessity of nature natural to man; and, as natural, universal. Wherever man is, it is; coextensive as it is coeval with the race, and it everywhere represents his quest after God" (Fairbairn). The spirit is the God-given principle or essence of man's life. To it belong

> "The sympathies, the hopes, the words that
> make man truly man."

The Apostle Paul often uses the term "*soul*," by which he simply means the earthward aspect of the spirit. The two terms are for all practical purposes one.

PERSONALITY. It is necessary for thought-purposes to distinguish, as we have done, between body, mind and spirit; but let us not forget that man is one in personality. It is folly to play off the heart against the head, reason against conscience, soul against spirit. When we act, it should be with the whole man; the whole personality should be realised.

II.

WHENCE CAME MAN?

SCRIPTURE. "In the beginning *God*—with these significant words the Bible record opens. They strike a chord which reverberates throughout. Man is from the hand of God. The knowledge that their help came from the Lord "who made heaven and earth" thrilled the souls of men and thirled them to Jehovah. In the creation records, Genesis i. and ii., all life flows from God. His creative power is the motive of the prophet's great appeal in Isaiah xl. 55. It is the climax of the Book of Job xxxvi.-xxxix. The poet hymns it in Psalm civ. and in Psalm cxxxix. Man is seen to be the workmanship of the omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God.

"Thou hast formed my reins,
Thou didst weave me together in my mother's womb;
I will give Thee thanks, for that I am fearfully and wonderfully made,
Wonderful are Thy works."

The New Testament gives like prominence to the creative activity of God. In their early preaching the Apostles exalted Him who made the heaven and the earth and all that dwell therein. The worlds were framed by Him, and He upholds all things by the word of His power. Paul at Athens placed himself in living sympathy with the Athenians. It was his privilege, he said, to reveal to them their Unknown God. He is the Creator; no temple can hold Him, no image represent Him, no gift increase His honour or His power. All men have proceeded from Him. "He has marked out for them an appointed span of life and the boundaries of their homes, that they might seek God, if perhaps they could grope for Him and find Him. For it is in closest union with Him that we live and move and have our being; .... for we are also His offspring." That is the New Testament answer to the question, "Whence is Man?" Paul found the germ of the truth even in pagan poetry and philosophy.

SCIENCE. God has spoken "in many distinct messages and by various methods" (Hebrews i. 1. Weymouth). He has written His truth deep in nature. "The heavens proclaim God's splendour; the sky speaks of His handiwork." The story of creation lies in creation; it waits the full interpretation. It is the special business of Science to deal with material phenomena; its methods are observation, experiment, and induction. It is chiefly concerned with the question *How?* Its departments are so many and varied that its workers are like the workers on a jig-saw puzzle; they must often fail to see any connection between the parts on which they are

severally working. Yet all truth is one. Sooner or later it must all be seen related to the master-truth, which is God. What is required of us is that we face the facts without fear or prejudice, seeking in every sphere—science, philosophy or theology—the unfolding of His perfect revelation.

The trend of scientific thought since the epoch-making discoveries of Darwin has been to see in evolution the method by which the Creator has brought into existence the varied forms of life. There is an atheistic interpretation of "evolution," which has been much trumpeted and caused much alarm among those who are jealous for the glory of God. But, as Sir Wilfred Grenfell has just been reminding us, such modern scientists as Eddington, Jeans, Braggs, Millikin, Einstein and Edison have with their increasingly intellectual modesty taught that there is a spiritual Power outside ourselves. That is the language of Science; in religion the word is *God*.

What is the attitude to Genesis i. and ii. of those who accept the evolutionary hypothesis? Let one speak:

> "If I were asked to point to a proof of the inspiration of Scripture, I would unhesitatingly give the first chapter of Genesis. When you remember its lowly origin, and see the splendid dignity and spirituality which the Spirit of God has brought to it, you cannot doubt the legitimate place of legend in the Word of God. And if you ask: Is it true? I would answer first: Is what true? The core of it is true. God is behind all the order and beauty of the world. In its detail it is in contradiction to modern science. It is

not a scientific account. It is a religious account" (Dr. F. J. Rae. "The Teacher and the Old Testament." "*Expository Times.*" Vol. 47, p. 454.)

Such an attitude is, in the judgment of some, unsatisfactory. They hold that man is a special creation, and this they seek to prove from results of scientific research, as well as by reference to the Bible. Recent books having this aim are, "*Man, A Special Creation,*" Dewar (*Thynne*) and "*The Origin of Mankind,*" Sir Ambrose Fleming (*Marshall, Morgan & Scott*). It will be seen that to prove his point Sir Ambrose claims that the six days of Genesis were periods and not, as Genesis says, "days;" that the flood was local, that Adam was not the original man, and so on. This shows that alike for the conservative and the progressive there is set a difficult task. The final question is not How, but Whence. The answer is "In the beginning God;" that is the consistent message of the Book, the finding to which science is more and more approximating.

III.

HIS INSIGNIFICANCE.

Man's apparent insignificance in this so great a universe makes it hard for him to believe that he has any real or abiding worth. The Psalmist said:

"When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained;
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
Or the son of man that Thou visitest him?"

The star-lit sky suggested to him the vastness and the mystery of the universe. He did not have the knowledge which modern astronomy has brought within our reach. Make a dot upon a piece of paper; it will probably measure 1/50th inch. Suppose the world to be that size. Then the distance to the sun would be 19½ feet, to the nearest star over 1000 miles, to the farthest photographed galaxy nearly 82 thousand million miles.

In Thomas Hardy's *Two on a Tower* a young astronomer says: "The imaginary picture of the sky as the cavity of a dome whose base stretches from horizon to horizon is grand, simply grand, and I wish I had never got beyond looking at it that way. But the actual sky is a horror. There is a size at which dignity begins; further on there is a size at which grandeur begins; further on there is a size at which solemnity begins; further on a size at which awfulness begins; further on a size at which ghastliness begins. That size faintly approaches the size of the stellar universe." The mood of "sheer terror" must beget in man a sense of desperate pessimism. How can God care for insignificant a creature in so insignificant a world?

Another thought which crushes man with the sense of his unimportance and meaninglessness is the transitoriness of human life. He is here to-day and gone to-morrow, and the place thereof knows him no more. The weariness which this thought begets is reflected in Ecclesiastes and in the Book of Job. In the Psalms it runs like a sad undertone.

" Man is like unto a breath,
His days as a shadow that passeth " (Psalm cxliv. 4).

" Thou hast made my days as an handbreadth,
And mine age is nothing before Thee ;
Verily, man at his best state is altogether vanity" (Psalm xxxix. 5).

" In the morning they are like grass which groweth up.
In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up ;
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth." (Psalm xc. 5f.).

IV.

HIS INFINITE PRECIOUSNESS.

By these and a thousand other tokens it is possible to argue man's impotence and worthlessness. But man in his saner moments feels that they do not include all the facts, that they do not completely explain him to himself. So much depends on the interpretation of facts. For example, we have just seen what the Psalmist learned from the grass. Hear Jesus on the same fact. He " looks at this same ephemeral grass ; but it brings Him different thoughts. It is a thing of beauty, a glimpse into the mind of the Artist who puts all His love and all His grace into His humblest handiwork. But in respect of its fleeting life, how *unlike* man. ' If God dresses like this the common grass, here to-day, tossed into the oven to-morrow, how much more (will He remember) *you!* (Matthew vi. 30).' " (J. F. McFadyen. *Jesus and Life.* p. 80f). This bears out the saying of Dr. D. S. Cairns that " Jesus Christ is the great believer in man."

If we ask Why, the answer lies in His thought

of God. God is *our Father*. A father's love is not conditioned by the size, or a mother's by the strength, of the child. Granted that we are but units among fifteen thousand million of our kind, granted that ours is but one generation of the thousands which come and pass away, if you and I are in any sense children, we matter to God, we are not without significance. We *are* the special objects of His care. "The Spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty giveth me life;" the planetary system to which the earth belongs is a rare object in the stellar universe; the earth alone is fitted to be the cradle of human life; man alone makes contact with infinite and eternal Spirit; he only can relate himself to the spiritual ends for which he has been created. Pascal said that if the universe were to crush man, he would still be greater than the universe, for he would know that he was being crushed. So precious is man in God's sight that the Creator is become the Redeemer. "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

In this thought of the Father-love of God lies also the answer to the arguments from the transitoriness of human life. "The ground-plan of the Universe is unreasonable if there is implanted within us a burning desire to know its mysteries and we are none the less fated to perish in ignorance. The scheme of things is equally unreasonable if man's personality is destroyed at death so that all his spiritual achievements are wasted save for such fragments as may survive through his influence on others" (E. W. Barnes). If that had been man's fate Jesus, the Truth,

would have disillusioned His disciples. He said, "In My Father's house are many mansions: *if it were not so, I would have told you*; I go to prepare a place for you."

V.

THE DIVIDED SELF.

Man is of infinite worth, but is he worthy? There are times when he feels that, if God be our Father, he must confess, "I am no more worthy to be called Thy son." Whatever his greatness, he is conscious of a certain baseness. He does not seem to be one person, but two—a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde living under the same roof. There are self-seeking impulses which clash with ideals that are known to be higher; the climax is reached in decisive warfare between selfishness and the will of God. To Paul this was a very real struggle, bringing him down almost to despair (Romans vii.). So long as the struggle remained undecided he was a wretched man.

St. Augustine had the same experience. He was a man of strong, undisciplined sex instinct. In his *Confessions* he gives us to see this in conflict with all that was highest and best within him and without. "Like every man and woman he had dreams of beauty in character, and these stars were pulled from the skies and trodden into the mire of the pig-sty." Sometimes it is the stress of the downward pull, as with St. Augustine; sometimes the strength of the upward as when George Bernard Shaw, in *The*

Shewing-Up of Blanco Posnet, makes the horse-thief to say, " Why did I go soft myself? Why did the Sheriff go soft? Why did Feeny go soft? What's the game that upsets our game? For seems to me there's two games being played. Our game is a rotten game that makes me feel I'm dirt and that you're all as rotten dirt as me. T'other game may be a silly game; but it ain't rotten. When Feeny played it the paint nearly dropped off her face. When I played it myself I cursed myself for a fool; but I lost the rotten feel all the same." Whether the downward or the upward pull be the particular stress of the moment, the result is strain and misery.

> " It is as if two mortal foes contended
> Within my bosom in a deadly strife,
> One for the loftier aims for souls intended,
> One for the earthly life. (*E. Wilcox*).

Bertrand Russell does not profess any vision of, or belief in, Christ as the Good Physician, but his diagnosis shows that there is certainly need for treatment that will restore soul-health and harmony. Speaking of " the civilised man," he says, " He knows that there is something better than himself almost within his grasp, yet he does not know where to seek it or how to find it. In despair he rages against his fellow-man, who is equally lost and equally unhappy."

VI.

A SINNER—LOST.

It is Bertrand Russell's conviction that man and his fellow-man are lost in a forest of doubt and fear. The word "*lost*" carries us back to the stories which have made Luke xv. one of the brightest pages of Scripture. There Jesus speaks of "that which is lost." The English and the Greek words have this in common, that they are used in a double sense. The sheep that has strayed has lost itself and is lost to the shepherd ; it is ignorant of its whereabouts and danger ; it is missed by its owner. The prodigal realises he is lost when he would fain fill his belly with the husks that the swine do eat ; the father has missed him all the time.

There are more ways than one of being lost. We do not all share the egotism and self-sufficiency of the vain and foolish lad who proved himself so unfilial, heartless and presumptious, and who threw away his money, his character and his very life among wine-bibbers and harlots. We may be lost in the sense that the elder brother was lost—lost to real sonship and spiritual fellowship, to that happy relationship with the father which makes home home. "A man may be lost as a ship is lost when it goes down in a total wreckage at sea. It is possible to be lost as a child is lost. You may be lost in the sense of missing all that is best and holiest and loveliest in human life—lost to certain great things having a final value."

"What is man?" "A sinner—missed;" that is the definition of Jesus in Luke xv. He was speaking in defence of His unconventional association with publicans and sinners. The Pharisees believed these people were lost—doomed, damned. Jesus showed that they were lost—missed and sought after. He came to express this truth, to reveal this passion so mighty in the heart of God the Father.

"The water's going out to sea
And there's a great moon calling me;
But there a great sun calls the moon,
And all God's bells will carol soon
For joy and glory and delight
Of someone coming home to-night."
Masefield. *The Everlasting Mercy.*

CHAPTER V.

THE ATONEMENT.

1.	ANCIENT SACRIFICE ...	Genesis xxii. 1-14.
2.	THE FACT OF THE CROSS	Mark xv. 22-37.
	INTERPRETATIONS :—	
3.	A RANSOM	Mark x. 45.
4.	PROPITIATION ...	1 John ii. 1-5 ; iv. 10.
5.	SUBSTITUTION ...	Isaiah liii.
6.	ITS MEANING FOR US ...	Galatians ii. 19, 20.

CHAPTER V.

THE ATONEMENT.

I.

ANCIENT SACRIFICE.

Our last chapter closed with the thought, Man is a sinner, lost—missed by God. God, Himself personal, created men capable of personal relations with Him. In Him is our peace; out of harmony with Him, only friction, tension, strain, ruin. Man by his own action has become alienated and estranged from God. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way." This is our peril and misery, and it is the deep concern of a loving God.

What He has done to recover man to fellowship is told in the doctrine of the Atonement. The English word "*atonement*" means "*reconciliation*" ("AT+ONE=set at one, unite"). It had no other meaning when the Authorized Version of the Scriptures was published. The Greek word, which it represents, is "reconciliation," and is so translated throughout the New Testament, except in Romans v. 11, the one passage in which "atonement" occurs ("We also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.") The word in the Old Testament, rendered *atone*, means properly to *cover*. Sin is covered so that its operation is hindered, or its effects invalidated. In

theology the meaning of the word *atonement* is extended to cover all that God has done to bring back man to Himself, and particularly all the sacrificial and redemptive work of Christ.

Reconciliation has been the quest of the human heart through all the ages. It has been the longing of the unsatisfied millions of all religions through all time. By many blind alleys men have sought God. They have hoped to reach Him by endless incarnations, painful pilgrimages or perpetual penances. With all their seeking they have found only disappointment and loss, for peace of conscience and release for the sin-bound soul do not lie in these directions.

The ancients tried the way of *sacrifice*. There have been various explanations, sacrifice offered as food to the gods, as gifts to the gods, as an act of communion with the gods, or as a means of expiating sin before the gods. To the Jew the "sin-offering," the "guilt-offering," and, according to Ezekiel xlv. 15-17, even the "meal-offering," the "burnt-offering," and the "peace-offering" were for the *expiation of the sins of the House of Israel.* "The whole sacrificial system was a means whereby the covenant relation between Jehovah and Israel might be retained . . . It was intended to purge away uncleanness that would involve the breaking of a relationship already established" (C. R. North).

The prophets protested against all mechanical observance of religious rite and ceremony. They learned to spiritualize the whole conception of sacrifice, and insisted that if there was not the offering of the humble and contrite heart, sacrifice was iniquity. In the sacrificial system of the Levitical Law sin was

said to be expiated by the death of beasts representative of those who offered them. These were offered as the token of penitence, else they were vain. They taught the idea of *vicarious suffering*—the suffering of the innocent for the guilty, whereby the guilty are redeemed from their sin; they led up to a vicariousness, red with the blood of real life, as seen in Jeremiah and the righteous remnant, and idealised in the Suffering Servant of Jehovah (Isaiah liii.)

All this was preparation for the Evangel. The Forerunner announced Jesus as "the Lamb of God which beareth away the sin of the world." Christ Himself associated His supreme Self-sacrifice with the Paschal Lamb. The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who more than any other New Testament author dwells on Israel's sacrificial system, exposing its utter insufficiency, sees in it a foreshadowing of better things to come. God's eternal Son, Himself the victim whom He offered, in loving sympathy for His brethren, in loyal obedience to the Father's will, opened up a new and living way. His blood cleansed the conscience, and bade men draw nigh. Thus by animal types and by human forerunners of Christ men were gradually prepared for the unfolding of the plan of redemption.

II.

THE FACT OF THE CROSS.

But we have been anticipating. We have been peeping into a letter written long after the original founders of the Christian Church had passed away.

Let us turn to a page of Roman history. Tacitus, in his *Annals*, book xv. chapter xlv., tells how the "sect" known as the Christians were blamed for the burning of Rome in A.D. 64. Explaining who these people were, he says about the Founder of their Faith: "*Christus was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea, in the reign of Tiberius.*"

The record makes it plain that One called Christ suffered judicial execution at a given time and place. He did not die of old age and infirmity, He was not cut off by accident or disease, He did not suffer in some much applauded act of heroism. He died as the meanest of criminals—upon a cross. The records show that before Pontius Pilate He was charged with treason—He claimed to be a King—in an Empire which acknowledged only the Emperor. "And they set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Pilate, his judge, openly acknowledged that the charge was not substantiated; he could find no fault in Him. He gave sentence to save an ugly situation arising among the Jews, whose rulers had brought Him to the judgment-seat for reasons best known to themselves.

They had already condemned Him in their own courts on the charge of blasphemy—He claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God. They had a law which made this a capital offence which required that He should suffer death by stoning; but they dare not move without consent of the Roman authorities. Roman law cared nothing for the religious grounds on which Jesus was condemned; hence the charge of treason so ill-substantiated.

To His immediate friends the crucifixion of

Jesus was horror unspeakable. It added to the pain of bereavement and sense of loss the blackness of darkness, for they had trusted in Him, built high hopes upon Him, sacrificed everything for His sake—and this was the end! Not so; light broke through the darkness. His disciples claimed that He was risen from the dead and had appeared to them. Their night was turned to day, their weakness to strength. Out of their ruined hopes rose the Church, founded on the facts of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Christianity is a historical religion. It rests upon fact, and not as many other religions on myth, mystery or mysticism. It reaches back to a historic Founder, who is Himself the soul and centre of it. God has made history a medium through which He has revealed Himself. He has broken in upon the world by peaceful penetration in the person of His Son. At the heart of history is the Cross. Christianity was occasioned by this event, the truth of which could be verified. It exalts not a Christ-idea, but a Christ-person—One who liveth and was dead and is alive for evermore.

III.

A RANSOM.

No fact has had such a place or emphasis in Christian thought or experience as the Cross. Our problem is how to interpret it, and relate it to the need and consciousness of our age. Is there a comprehensive, consistent, and effective working theory of the atonement? Some say that there was, as evidenced

in the " mighty power " of the preached word of the older evangelicals. But as Canon J. G. Simpson, who was well acquainted with their message—he heard Moody on his first visit to this country in 1874—has pointed out, what they preached was not the penal or other theory of the atonement, but the finished work of Christ, the Love of God and the Divine Initiative, a message representative of nearly all the great historic doctrines. Canon Green has likened the doctrine of the atonement to some great cathedral. As different observers describe it, we find that impressions differ according to viewpoint and experience. The building is one, but not the same for all. It is our duty to meditate upon the Cross of Christ until what is essential and vital in the historic doctrines grips us, and some aspect of truth becomes our very own.

From the lips of Jesus there came two significant words about His death, Mark x. 45 (Matthew xx. 28), and Mark xiv. 24. The first of these reads, " For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." The disciples were at the moment consumed with ambition and jealousy, looking to a time when they, like Gentile rulers, should exercise arbitrary sway over subjects and inferiors. Jesus shows that this is not the standard of the Kingdom of God. There service precedes greatness, the service of disinterested love, based on submission to the will of God. He Himself had taken upon Him the form of a servant, having come as " the Son of Man." His ministry must culminate in the sacrifice of His life, which sacrifice is unique; since it is " given," a

voluntary offering, and will serve as a " ransom for many."

The word " ransom " was a household word among the Jews. If the first-born in the family were a boy, his father ransomed him from the service of the sanctuary by the payment to the priest of five shekels ransom money. This gave the child freedom to follow any trade or profession he might afterwards choose. The word had a real significance, too, for a world of slavery, such as the Roman world was in the days of Christ. The menace of brigandage in far distant parts of the Empire, even in such places as the Jerusalem-Jericho road, and the terrible plight of captives of war, all made " redemption " a living issue in an age when there was always a threat to life and freedom.

In George Eliot's *Romola*, Baldasarre, the slave, gave gems to Tito Milema, that he might redeem him. That young man sold them for his own profit and pleasure. On one occasion Romola's blind father, Bardo, asked to be allowed to handle the gems ; but Tito said they were in the safe keeping of a goldsmith, who estimated their value at 500 ducats at least. " Ah, then, they are fine gems," said Bardo, " five hundred ducats ! more than a man's ransom ! " The word smote on the conscience of Tito like a knife, for they *were* a man's ransom.

Jesus came to give His life a ransom for many. The thought remained with the Apostles. Redemption is one of the great themes of the New Testament. " There is one God," says St. Paul, " one Mediator also between God and man, Himself man, Christ Jesus, *who gave Himself a ransom for all.*" St. Peter

has the same thought; "Ye were redeemed, not with corruptible things, with silver or gold, . . . but with precious blood, as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot, even the blood of Christ."

Ransom speaks of bondage, deliverance, and the cost of deliverance. Man is enslaved, Christ is come as Redeemer, He gave His life as ransom. Those who will turn poetry into prose, and parables into jig-saw puzzles, ask "To whom was the ransom paid?" There is no answer; the question is irrelevant. What the picture shows is the fact that man is set free from the old bondage, at the cost of the life of the Son of God become man for our redemption.

IV.

PROPITIATION.

The word "ransom" helps us to understand the exceeding cost of our redemption; it illumines for us the self-emptying, the humiliation, the agony and the crucifixion of our Lord. When New Testament writers asked, What did all this accomplish? they made use of other terms, including one we now consider—"Propitiation." This English word means "to appease (an offended person)." The Greek word of which it is the translation has reference to "an offering made to appease some deity." This certainly was the meaning in pagan religions, where the object of sacrifice was usually to propitiate an offended God. Many resent the use of such a word in the Christian religion. Dr. Dale discovered actual hostility to the idea (*Fellowship with Christ*, p. 325). He says, "They protest that God is love, that nothing

is needed to induce Him to forgive the sins of men; that Propitiation is not only unnecessary, but intolerable; that the idea is an outrage on the mercy of God, and a hindrance to the faith of man." In more recent years, as Professor Riddle points out (*Expository Times*, March 1936), there has been a marked reaction against this type of argument, which blots out justice from the moral ideal and degrades God's love into an ethical softness, which has been described as "the master error of our day, and the form in which the contemporary mind becomes guilty of apostasy from God." Hostility to the thought of Propitiation arises mainly from the assumption that the New Testament use of the word is the same in all respects as the pagan. As a matter of fact, this is not so. It is a word which even in the Old Testament was lifted to higher levels, and in the New Testament thoroughly Christianised.

Let us look at the passages in which it occurs :—

> "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth to be a propitiation, through faith, by His blood, to show His righteousness" (Romans iii. 24f).
>
> "God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10).
>
> "And He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2).
>
> "It behoved Him in all things to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

The New Testament writers have much in common, yet each has his own emphasis, in the use of the word. All make it to bring home to us the exceeding heinousness of sin. " There is a tragic reality in redemption, not inferior to, but rather identical with, the tragic reality of sin; and apart from this Christ would not have the character of a *propitiation.* He would not do justice to God's attitude to sin, as One who not only forgives but inexorably repels and condemns it; He would not enable God to be in this sense just in the very act in which He justifies the man who can be adequately described as a believer in Jesus " (Denny. *The Christian Doctrine of Reconciliation.* p. 158). Dr. Forsyth also makes this plain (*The Work of Christ*, p. 243). " Did God not lay on Him the iniquity of us all, and inflict that veiling of His face which darkened to dereliction even the Redeemer's soul? . . God never left Him, but He did refuse Him His face. The communion was not broken, but its light was withdrawn. He was forsaken but not disjoined. He was insolubly bound to the very Father who turned away and could not look on sin but to abhor and curse it even when His Son was beneath it." The necessity for and the nature of the Propitiation helps us to see sin as it really is.

The other point the writers have in common is that God Himself provides it out of His pure love, " whom God set forth (R.V. mg. ' purposed ') to be a propitiation " (St. Paul); " God loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (St. Paul). We touch here the unfathomable mystery of God's redeeming work. " God requiring, providing, receiv-

ing the propitiation, it was *offered* by Christ, who was God-in-man, acting not as God, but as the Representative of man. God gave humanity in Christ the means of making propitiation." The source is God's love; the range is "the whole world"; Christ *is* (not He *was*) the propitiation; He is ours by faith. "Only at the cross of Christ does man see fully what it is that separates Him from God; yet it is here alone that he perceives that he is no longer separated from God" (Brunner. *Mediator*. 451f.).

V.

SUBSTITUTION.

Up to this point we have been considering the cost to Christ of His redeeming work, and what it has wrought for the sinner. What is the significance of that work for the individual? Under the early Hebrew ritual the worshipper probably thought of the animal-sacrifice offered as a substitute for himself. The Psalmist saw that "a broken and a contrite heart" was the substitute for the penalty of sin, and a plea for its forgiveness. The prophet in Isaiah liii. feels that the sinful are too indifferent to repent. It needs the suffering of the Servant of Jehovah to move them to repentance—"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed."

Jesus was the sinner's substitute, not in the cold legal sense, but in the only sense that love can know. "Himself sinless, He so loved man as to become one

with mankind, and so to feel the sorrow, suffering, shame and doom of sin as His very own. All love is vicarious, and when the love of God was revealed in the grace of Jesus Christ, it took man's burden, waged man's struggle, and tasted man's death. Just as the parent has the broken and the contrite heart for the sin of the child, so Christ in His death was heart-broken for man's sin and all it involves." (Garvie. *Handbook of Christian Apologetics.* p. 126.)

This theory of the Atonement (more often some travesty of it) has been objected to as " reactionary " by those who claim that the one value of the Cross of Christ is as a motive to reproduce in us its own characteristic moral qualities. They have argued that the substitutionary theory is unethical. They forget that the true vision of " the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of glory died," awakens a deep and ever-present sense of debt to Christ, which expresses itself not only in doxology but devotion. It strengthens men by giving them the assurance that the one thing needful for our salvation was once for all done and endured at the cross. These values are being more and more acknowledged, even by those of other schools of thought, who see that they cannot dismiss the idea of Vicarious Suffering, or even the idea of Substitution.

VI.

ITS MEANING FOR US.

In his *Vision and Authority* (p. 231), Dr. Oman asks why all the abstract presentations of this

doctrine are unsatisfying, while the presentation of the Apostles " remains ever attractive and sweetly persuasive." He answers that " the theologian always deals with the doctrine from without, and the Apostle always looks at it from within." " Love cannot be interpreted from the outside " (p. 233).

When Paul says " The life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, *who loved me, and gave Himself up for me*," we realise that he is interpreting love from the inside. The experience began with the vision of the Risen Christ, who stood revealed as Jesus the persecuted. The vision brought him the knowledge of the love of God made manifest in the Crucified. Hitherto he had regarded the Law as the medium through which life was to be disciplined, perfected and presented. The Law illuminated, but it also exasperated and discouraged him, almost to the point of despair. On the Damascus Road he had the experience which made him realise that not through any code or system, but through direct contact with the living Christ, a contact possible to all through simple, child-like faith, he could enter into fellowship with God, which is life and life more abundant.

Dr. Garvie utters a much-needed warning against " the error of the evangelical orthodoxy which substituted acceptance of a plan of salvation, or a theory of the atonement for the personal experience of the saving grace of the Living Lord." " Everything depends on a man's union with a living present Saviour," says James S. Stewart (*A Man in Christ*). " In the absence of that union, even the Gospel of the Cross loses its efficacy . . Atonement remains

impersonal and largely irrelevant, until we make contact with one who atones."

"I am not moved, my God, to love of Thee
By heaven which Thou didst pledge me as reward.
I am not moved to cease to grieve Thee, Lord,
By thoughts and fears of Hell which threaten me.
Thou mov'st me, O my God, Moved sore am I
To see Thee nailed upon the cruel tree,
The scorn of men, wounded despitefully.
Mov'd am I thus, my Lord, to love Thee; yea,
Were there no Heaven at all, I'd love Thee still,
Were there no Hell, my due of fear I'd pay.
Thou need'st not make me gifts to move my will,
For were my hopes of Heaven quite fled away,
Yet this same love my heart would ever feel."

Spanish Sonnet, quoted in "*The Other Spanish Christ*," 201, J. A. Mackay.

CHAPTER VI.

SALVATION.

1.	FORGIVENESS :—	
	REMISSION OF SINS	Luke v. 17-26.
2.	RESTORATION TO FELLOWSHIP ...	Luke xv. 11-32.
3.	RECOVERY TO MANHOOD	Joel ii. 21-27.
4.	JUSTIFICATION	Romans iii. 21-30.
5.	REPENTANCE AND FAITH	Luke xviii. 9-14.
6.	"SOME OTHER WAY" ...	John x. 1-6.

CHAPTER VI.

SALVATION.

I.

REMISSION OF SINS.

THE most comprehensive statement of the Divine purpose in the coming of Christ is probably that in 1 John iv. 14, "the Father sent the Son to be *the Saviour of the world.*" Jesus Himself said, "The Son of Man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56); "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world" (John xii. 47). In this doctrine we discover what Christ works *in* us, just as in the doctrine of the Atonement we saw what Christ has done *for* us.

Salvation begins with the message of Forgiveness. Such a word is impossible, some say. "Forgiveness is a beggar's refuge; we must pay our debts," declares George Bernard Shaw. With the great dramatists of all ages he feels the most tragic element in human life, the persistence of a sense of guilt, the hopelessness of outrunning conscience. So also George Eliot, who thought that the world would be infinitely better and happier if men could be made to feel that there is no escape from the inexorable law that what a man soweth that he must also reap. Better, perhaps, to feel with the dramatist and novelist how great must be the miracle of forgiveness, than to suffer that want of moral sensibility which deems sin so light and trivial,

as to make forgiveness no problem at all. If in our thought of the Atonement we have entered the shadows of Gethsemane, or with spirit hushed stood in the noonday darkness of Calvary, we must have felt with Dr. Chalmers that here is a problem " fit for a God." " It is to declare in one breath that the wages of sin is death, and also that we who are sinners are heirs of eternal life . . . . It is to be eternally just and also the eternal Justifier of the unjust" (P. C. Simpson. *The Fact of Christ*. p. 144f.).

Jesus said to the paralytic brought to Him by the persistent four, " Child, thy sins are forgiven thee." The sufferer and his interested friends hoped for a miracle of healing. The Good Physician's diagnosis took Him deeper.

> " Thy kind but searching glance can scan
> The very wounds that shame would hide."

He spoke peace to the troubled mind, forgiveness to the sin-burdened conscience. That is the Divine method. In what does forgiveness consist ?

First, in *Remission of Sins*. The thought here is the removal of the cause of offence in such fashion as leaves a person free. The debt is paid and the bill torn up. Remission was a favourite word in the earliest apostolic preaching. Christ, belief in Christ, and consequent freedom from sin's guilt and power—that was the first Christian message. It assured men that the vision of the prophets was now realised. " I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sins no more." " The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none ; and the sins of

Judah, and they shall not be found" (Jeremiah xxxi. 43; l. 20). John Bunyan saw Pilgrim run "till he came to a place somewhat ascending; and upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below in the bottom a Sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his back; and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in, and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, 'He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death.'"

Just such a joy the paralytic must have felt, when, realising the sympathy and love of Jesus as well as His marvellous spiritual insight, he knew that the sin of his life was dismissed, that God had blotted it out for His own sake, and would remember it no more. The sin that had him low, and brought him a helpless ruin of manhood to Jesus' feet, would never, according to the promises, be mentioned to him. This is the word of the Love revealed supremely in the shedding of blood on Calvary's tree.

II.

RESTORATION TO FELLOWSHIP.

The second aspect of Forgiveness—and the very heart of it—is Restoration to the fellowship and favour of God. The confidence and affection which sin had thwarted or destroyed are completely restored.

One of King David's greatest mistakes was his pitiful half-forgiveness of his son, Absalom. The

young prince had been exiled for a crime of revenge. David was urged to " fetch home again his banished." Joab went to Geshur, brought Absalom to Jerusalem; " and the king said, Let him turn to his own house, *but let him not see my face.* So Absalom turned to his own house, and saw not the king's face." Not until Absalom kicked against this treatment continued through two miserable years, not until he brought Joab to heel over the matter, was he restored to the king's favour. Only then did he receive the reconciling kiss. In these two years was hatched the plot which brought about his destruction and the king's deepest sorrow.

Not so does God forgive. Jesus brought to the outcast and abandoned tidings of free and full forgiveness. The Pharisees could not understand love that embraced even publicans and sinners. To help them understand, Jesus told the Parable of the Prodigal. It is of the essence of true forgiveness that the father ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. In contrast to the half-forgiveness of David, in contrast to " forgiveness " that cannot forget, the forgiveness of Luke xv. brings the lad back into immediate and complete fellowship, into all the privileges and duties of sonship. It was as though there had never been a break. " St. Augustine reminds us (*Confessions*, viii. 3) how much more we care for a thing that has been ours, when we have lost it and found it again . . . And Jesus implies that when a man is saved, he is God's again, and more God's own than ever; and God is glad at heart " (Glover. *Jesus of History*. p. 183).

This aspect of Forgiveness, properly understood,

helps us to see how it is that there is *unpardonable sin.* Where there is wilful and persistent sinning against light, till light itself is turned into darkness—a perversion of conscience amounting to sin against the Holy Ghost (Matthew xii. 22), there is refusal of fellowship with God. The unforgiving spirit, too, gives practical evidence of such refusal. Forgiveness is recovery to fellowship.

IV.

RECOVERY TO MANHOOD.

A third aspect of Forgiveness is Recovery to Manhood—recovery of lost moral qualities and faculties. An ancient promise to Israel ran, " I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the canker-worm, and the caterpillar and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you." Is there anything corresponding to that in Christian experience ?

So long as sin has dominion over life there is moral and spiritual deterioration. Temptation gains in strength while the powers of resistance grow less and less. Habits forge fetters on moral freedom. In measure as evil takes possession the desire for good is evicted. If the sin is to the flesh, the sinner will " of the flesh reap corruption." There is an intimacy between body and soul which is too often forgotten. In nature's revenge we remember.

No man can alter the past. Let us learn, however, that " the importance of the past to us is, that it is not past, but is part of the present, and its effect

upon us in the present depends on our attitude towards it. If God changes that attitude, He does indeed change the past for us; and this is what He is ever doing" (G. A. Studdart Kennedy. *The Wicket Gate*. p. 205). If forgiveness is restored relationship between son and Father, Father and son may work together to mend the past. As with the paralytic whom Jesus healed, there are miracles of grace wherein men seem to be detached from a sinful past. Drunkards converted have confessed that with the coming of Christ into their lives they have lost even the craving for drink. But where that remains and fierce conflict ensues, it ceases to be penal; it drives a man into the arms of God. "A saint may have a diseased body till death brings him release; a man who has turned from his evil ways may never quite recover his lost reputation with his fellow men; the old temptations may still assail, the old habits may seek to recover their grasp; and the removal of the marred character is often a slow and painful process; but nevertheless, when a man's relation to God is changed, the man himself having become a new creature, the old things have passed away, and all things have become new" (Garvie. *The Joy of Finding*. p. 91).

In the forgiven life even the physical consequences of former wrong-doing become, under the mercy of love, means of grace—chastisement, not punishment, discipline, not denunciation. The suffering of body, mind or spirit, which is sin's entail, will bring the soul nearer God, causing life to be more and more dependent upon Him and sincerely attached to Him. "All things work together for good

to them that love God;" this never seems more wonderful than when Divine grace works out of the sad harvest of sin character to the eternal glory of God. That is the crown of forgiveness.

IV.

JUSTIFICATION.

It was natural that men who were saved should try to understand and explain the wonderful experience through which they had passed. Truth and life come before logic and philosophy; but they who have lived and learned have the urge and the duty to pass down to others the secrets at the heart of their discoveries. Paul resorts to the thought of *Justification.*

The idea did not begin with him. It reaches back to Abraham, who "believed the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness." The writer to the Hebrews goes still further back—to Abel, who, because of his more excellent sacrifice, had this witness borne to him, that he was righteous. The Psalmist sang the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity. The prophets rose at times to the same heights. In the second part of Isaiah references are frequent to an outgoing righteousness of God which envelops men and counts them righteous. "By His knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities." "Their righteousness . . . is of Me" Isaiah (liii. 11, liv. 17).

It was given to the Apostle Paul, however, to work out this truth in the light of Calvary. Salvation had brought to him a change in the whole relationship

in which he had stood to God. He was no longer under wrath and condemnation, which are inseparable from unforgiven sin. The door of grace was open to him; he crossed the threshhold the moment his faith laid hold upon Christ. As Dr. Moffatt puts it, "'Justification' is not permission to wait in an antechamber, it is admission to the inner presence of God. Grace looks forward to the complete experience of this life at the end, but already the reconciliation is an actual experience" (*Grace in the New Testament*, p. 219).

Justification Paul saw to be possible only through the death of Christ. There the Divine Righteousness expressed itself against sin. Into that righteousness we enter by faith. It embraces in its scope all believers, all who have identified themselves with Christ. It does not, at the moment, make them actually righteous, but it justifies them, treats them as righteous, makes them to feel that the past is wiped out, that they start, not with a clean sheet, but with a new copy.

Salvation brings to men having this status a sense of present *peace*. "Being therefore justified by faith, let us have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; through whom we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand." This relationship carries with it also the hope or assurance of future glory, faith in its fruition. It sets us in the right attitude to life in all its phases, so that "tribulation works patience, patience probation, probation hope, and hope putteth not to shame; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." (Romans v. 1-5).

V.

REPENTANCE AND FAITH.

Before ever the Epistle to the Romans was written or Paul had grasped the truth of Justification, a greater than he had revealed it. In the Parable of the Two who went up into the Temple to pray Jesus showed a Publican, held in the utmost contempt by the people, himself overwhelmed by the sense of the Divine presence, conscious only of his sin as it must appear in the sight of a holy God. He feels himself to be *the* sinner, as though there were not another in all the Temple. The cry of his broken and contrite heart is, " God be merciful to me the sinner." Speaking as one pronouncing a verdict, Jesus said, " I say unto you, This man went down to his house *justified*, rather than the other." He did not mean that God saw him to be actually sinless, still less that God made him sinless on the spot; but rather that He granted him his deepest desire, set him free from the burden of sin and sent him forth with a sweet sense of forgiveness shed abroad in his heart.

(*a*) *Repentance.*

The Publican took the right attitude towards his own sin. There was a complete absence of self-justification and self-laudation. He refused to measure himself by false standards; he did not compare himself with others worse than he. He was humbled to the dust; " he would not lift so much as his eyes

unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me *the* sinner "—the sinner of sinners.

Such a confession indicated a *change of mind* regarding his transactions and his life in general. He had somehow come to see the baseness or the rottenness of the past, and was determined, God helping him, to break completely with it. How repentance was wrought in his soul we know not. The Psalmist had a glimpse of sin in its real character, sin as it is before God, and that broke him down (Psalm li. 4). A look from Jesus, the look of disappointed, suffering love, made Peter feel the horror of his denial. Nothing through the ages has so moved men to penitence as the sight of the Cross.

> " Come, let us stand beneath the Cross,
> The fountain opened in His side
> Shall purge our deepest sin away,
> Jesus, our Lord, is crucified.
>
> A broken heart, a fount of tears,
> Ask, and they will not be denied ;
> A broken heart love's offering is ;
> Jesus, our Lord, is crucified."

The Spirit of God is active in the world convicting men of sin, of righteousness and of judgment. He is co-operating in a multitude of ways to produce in men the attitude toward sin which is the first requisite on the human side for justification.

(*b*) *Faith.*

The second requisite is *Faith.* Turning his back upon sin, the Publican came into right relation-

ship with God. He sought Him in simple, earnest, child-like trust. There was intellectual content in his faith; he knew that "Jehovah is a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness and truth." He apprehended and appreciated something of the character of God.

But faith was to him more than right thinking; it was action and energy.

"Think not the faith by which the just shall live
Is a dead creed, a map correct of heaven,
Far less a feeling, fond and fugitive,
A thoughtless gift, withdrawn as soon as given:
It is an affirmation and an act
That bids eternal truth be present fact."

HARTLEY COLERIDGE.

The Publican confessed himself a sinner, and committed himself to the mercy of God; he received assurance of sins forgiven, fellowship restored and grace sufficient for the journey and the conflict of life.

St. Paul does not repeat Jesus, but expresses the same truth as it finds him in experience. He treats of faith as linking up the soul with the risen Lord so that it is *in Christ*. God comes into touch with men in virtue of their relation with Christ. We are "accepted in the Beloved." "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Paul claims that this very faith is the gift of God. All faith is; what can be more a Divine gift than the faith of a little child in its mother? It is the object of faith that gives it its quality and dynamic. Faith in Christ is "saving faith," not because of anything in us, but because, as was foretold of Him at His coming, "He shall save His people from their sins."

VI.

"SOME OTHER WAY."

Christ is not universally recognised as the Way. We speak not of lands as yet unenlightened, where religion is all quest, weary, fruitless quest. In Christian lands other ways are proclaimed.

(*a*) *Roman Catholic.*

In the Roman Catholic religion Justification is not an act of God at the beginning of the Christian life; it is partly of Divine grace, and partly of man's works; man saves himself with the aid of the truth and grace offered him by the Church. There is no assurance of the certainty of salvation. "Except by special revelation, it cannot be known whom God hath chosen unto Himself." The Church is an institution of salvation, not a fellowship of the saved. Justifying grace is imparted by baptism; if lost, it is repaired by penance, increased by confirmation, the Eucharist, and the other sacraments. The effect of faith is to bring the believer, not into personal fellowship with God in Christ, but into proper relation with the Church, which mediates between God and man. The Roman Catholic way of salvation is not the New Testament way, which acknowledges no mediating priesthood, sacramental "grace," works of penance or merit, or aught that stands between the soul and Christ. It proclaims direct access to God in Him; assures men of the witness of the Spirit with their spirits,

that they are the children of God; calls men to the freedom of faith, the service of love and the patience of hope. In so far as Roman Catholicism has deviated from the simple teaching of the New Testament it is "some other way."

(*b*) *Humanism.*

Roman Catholicism preaches that Salvation is partly of man, partly of God. That is a compromise between the New Testament view that it is by grace, and no more of works, and the view of Humanism which insists that it is all of works, and not of Grace. Many are Humanists without belonging to any particular school; they have not thought out their practical faith. They are content to say with Henley:

> "I am the master of my fate,
> I am the captain of my soul."

There are different schools of thought, where Humanism has been exalted into a creed. All have this in common, that man must work out his own salvation *without* fear and trembling. Mr. Julian Huxley believes in *Knowledge*. As the result of greatly increased knowledge, civilised man is now in a position in large measure to model the world according to his desires. William Watson said:

> "Think not thy wisdom can illume away
> The ancient tanglement of night and day.
> Enough to acknowledge both and both revere;
> They see not clearliest who see all things clear."

The Apostle Paul said, " And if I have the gift of prophecy, *and know all mysteries and all knowledge*, but have not love . . . I am nothing." History, right up to the Great War and the failure to realise " security " since, seems rather to be with St. Paul.

Walter Lippmann puts his trust in *Goodwill*. That is the universal solvent, the condition of salvation. Once effect a divorce between morality and orthodox religion, he says, morality will stand on its own feet and carry humanity with it. About the standing we are sure, about the carrying not so sure. The difficulty with all types of humanism is that they will not recognise or get down to the basal problem in human life and society which is not ignorance or discord but *sin*. Humanism, says Canon Barry (*Relevance of Christianity*, p. 126), "is being tried out in a grandiose scale over the whole field of human enterprise. It has set Man on the world's vacant throne ; but it can no longer worship its idol. Self-worship is seldom successful. This is the scepticism that is destroying us."

What the scriptures teach, what Jesus confirmed, and what all true progress in the world has demonstrated is that man is not to be thought of apart from God. The vision of God is the spring of all fruitfulness. The only faith that can redeem our desires and wills is the faith which is in the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself up for us. " He that entereth not by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber."

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

1.	"MAKE THE TREE GOOD"	Matthew xii. 31-37.
2.	THE ROOTS	Matthew xviii. 1-14.
3.	GROWTH—CULTURE ...	2 Cor. iii. 13-18.
4.	GROWTH—DISCIPLINE ...	Hebrews ii. 10-18.
5.	FRUIT:	
	In Personal Life ...	Galatians v. 16-26.
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6.	THE LIFE	John xv. 1-16.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

I.

"MAKE THE TREE GOOD."

In a lecture concerning the nature of Christian faith Cardinal Newman said, "A feeble old woman first genuflects before the blessed sacrament and then steals her neighbour's handkerchief. She kneels because she believes, she steals because she does not love. . . How merciful a Providence it has been that faith and love are separable, as the Catholic (sic) faith teaches." Professor Peabody, who quotes the Cardinal, rightly says, "This divorce of faith from love, of religion from ethics, of prayer from pocket-picking appears to the modern mind unthinkable" (*Jesus Christ and Christian Character*, p. 30). He gives another illustration (p. 184)—a Negro convert who in a Southern prayer meeting shouts, "I's done broke all de commandments, but praise de Lord, I'se got my religion."

Jesus said, "Either *make the tree good* and its fruit good, or make the tree rotten and its fruit rotten; for the tree is known by its fruit" (Matthew xii. 33. Moffatt). He was speaking to those who believed that whatever thoughts a man might cherish in his heart, he must be careful not to allow them to escape the barrier of his lips. Until that happened there was no harm to anyone. Jesus gets behind all words to the spirit which produces them. It is the man, not the

speech, which is judged. Hence the need to make the tree good. The root impulse or attitude of the *ego* must be changed and hallowed, so that the whole man can be regarded as consecrated to God. " For this is the will of God, even your *sanctification* " (1 Thessalonians iv. 3, 4, 7). When, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, we are cleansed from our sinful past, and consecrated to God. We are called to be saints, to realise ourselves as holy, separated unto the will of God. Sanctification is not a slow, instinctive growth out of a sinful condition into holiness ; it is a growth *in* holiness. Being born again, we are dead to sin, and cannot live any longer therein. In a single act we present ourselves a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service (2 Corinthians vii. 1 ; Romans xii. 1f.). This is followed by " the work of God's free grace whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness " (*Shorter Catechism*).

The words " after the image of God " remind us that our word " *character* " is a direct transcription from the Greek, where it meant originally the sculptor's chisel, then *the image* chiselled out of marble or brass. The finished figure was known as the *character*. The word appears in the Greek New Testament just once, Hebrews i. 3, where Jesus is spoken of as " the express image " of the Father's inner being. " He that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father," for the reality of the Father's invisible being and glory stamps itself visibly in the Son. " On the plastic flesh of a human life Jesus chiselled out for all men to

see and adore the character of His heavenly Father." Christian character is the reproduction of Christ in our lives ; " for to me," said St. Paul, " life is Christ " (Philippians i. 21).

The formation of such character is the aim of Christianity. " We are sent," said Dr. Parker, " not to make theologians but Christians, not to build up a system but to build up character." Life is simply everyone's opportunity of achieving character. There is no mistaking the unspeakable importance which Jesus attached to personality. He made it clear that if on the battlefield of life we do not " win our souls," we have lived in vain. Death strips us bare of all else. Character—the image which we spend life to create—*lasts for ever*.

II.

THE ROOTS.

To return to Jesus' thought of character—in terms of life, not of stone or brass—let us consider some of the roots.

REVERENCE. " Worship," as a recent writer has reminded us, " has been the fount of morality " (F. A. Farley. *Expository Times*. xlvii. p. 172). The men and women who have been most effective in changing the world are those who have been inspired and sustained by the vision of God. What gave to the Hebrew nation its nobler ethic was its higher religion. The nation's history began when, and because, " the God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham " (Acts xv. 14). Moses, who endured as

seeing Him who is invisible, made the faith, the sanctuary, the Ark of Jehovah the rallying point of a united Israel. The prophets were "the servants of God," "the messengers of Jehovah;" their word was from the Lord. The Psalmist cried, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully" (Psalm xxiv. 3f.). The challenge to morality was not offered with the suggestion that it was "good form," "the best policy," or "the cement of society;" but on the ground that it sprang out of, and was essential to, right relations with God. "The real lesson of the present age is not that faith in a living God is obsolete, but rather that we have made too small a claim on the glory and majesty of the Lord. The irreligiousness of our contemporaries is in fact a standing rebuke to the poverty of the Church's thought of God" (Barry. *Relevance of Christianity*, p. 131). Christian character presupposes reverence, the worship of God in Christ. It has been said of James Russell Lowell, "His reverence for Christ is palpable in every line of his work, for to him the world was lovely, the cause of humanity was right, *the pursuit of the holy was required*, because the Son of God had been manifested to take away our sins."

HUMILITY. Another root of Christian character is Humility. In the pagan world humility was despised; the virtues of the finest ethical schools were founded on a self-pride. Aristotle's "lofty-minded man" spoke with a loud voice, walked with a steady gait, acknowledged no greatness that compelled wonder,

received presents only if he could give larger and free himself from sense of obligation, saw that he had a show of respect from his neighbours, though he might despise the majority of them. Jesus who revealed the power of gentleness, who was indeed "the meek and lowly of heart," has made the "lofty-minded" look foolish even in the eyes of the world. *What is Humility?* It is not the product of an artificial and self-studied abasement. Tragic is the moral condition of the man who is proud of his humility. It is not the obsequious self-depreciation immortalised by Dickens' Uriah Heep. Ruskin has described Humility in his *Frondes Agrestes:* "I believe the first test of a truly great man is his humility. By humility I do not mean doubt of his own power or hesitation in speaking his opinions, but a right understanding of the relation between what he can do and say and the rest of the world's sayings and doings. All great men not only know their business but usually know that they know it, and are not only right in their main opinions but they usually know that they are right in them; only they do not think much of themselves on that account. Arnolfo knows that he can build a good dome in Florence. Albert Durer writes calmly to one who had found fault with his work; 'It cannot be done better.' Sir Isaac Newton knows that he has worked out a problem or two that would have puzzled anybody else; only they do not expect their fellowmen, therefore, to fall down and worship them. They have a curious sense of powerlessness, feeling that the greatness is *not in them, but through them;* that they could not do or be anything else than God made them, and

that they see something divine and God-made in every other man they meet. Such humility is born of reverence, of the vision of God."

FAITH. Jesus taught humility by parable and proverb, often in reproof and rebuke. It is the secret of the open mind and receptive heart—the childlike disposition which is the *sine qua non* of entrance into the Kingdom. He exposed the proud, stale and powerless religion of the Pharisee and his satiated, closed heart. He showed that the life that is to grow must have faith as a root. The soul to be receptive must be responsive. Jesus called men not merely to an attitude but to an adventure. The root, to feed the plant, must forage, send its hair-like suckers out into the soil to receive. Desire leading to committal and to the exploration of the possibilities opening up before the soul in Christ, is faith. This is the root of all Christian character. Without faith it is impossible to connect with Him, to enter into living relations with Him.

III.

GROWTH—CULTURE.

GROWTH IS THE LAW OF LIFE; a plant that is not growing is dying. In the Christian life there must be growth. "The being born again is not everything; the growing after birth to maturity is much more, is the end for which birth is alone valuable" (Dods). St. Paul feels concerning converts who make no progress towards maturity the anxiety which parents have who see the infantile helplessness of their child

becoming chronic (1 Corinthians iii. 1f.). The writer to the Hebrews warns them that they are "falling away," if they are not going on to perfection (1 Corinthians v. 11ff.). *Christian growth is not involuntary or inevitable.*

> "No man ere gained a happy life by chance,
> Or yawned it into being with a wish."

The Scriptures call for strenuous moral effort, for persistent reaffirmation of the act of consecration (Romans vi. 19). Human nature is laggard, impotent, even hostile where intellectual or spiritual discipline is necessary. "If any man is lost at last," it has been said, "it will be through sheer, unmitigated laziness in some form or other." God gives the increase, but he requires of us the planting and the watering. Growth is imperative, since *the end is the perfection* of life revealed in Christ. Scorn easy, shallow views of perfection. It "is being, not doing—it is not to effect an act, but to achieve a character. In the Christian life every moment and every act is an opportunity for doing the one thing of becoming Christlike" (F. W. Robertson). "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew v. 48). Thank God, a man can grow.

In the cultivation of character slavish *Imitation* is to be avoided; it destroys moral freedom and starves personality. "Imitation," says Kant, "has no place in morals." We may strive to do what Jesus did, even to the point of supreme sacrifice—"give our bodies to be burned"—and find it profits us nothing (1 Corinthians xiii. 3). *Contemplation*

resulting in action is the true method, not to imitate but to behold Him, until we catch His spirit, enter into His mind, and know Him not merely as our Example, but as our abiding inspiration.

The rush and hurry of modern life do not favour calm reflection or quiet meditation. Happy the man who makes and fulfils the vows, " I will pray to Him and read the Bible every day." " *Prayer* is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air." Jesus found in prayer the peace, the poise and the power which enriched His life and ministry. Prayer is essentially fellowship with the Father—not an expedient for getting our will done in heaven and on earth. The prayer of faith, be it petition or intercession, offered in the name of Jesus, with sincerity, thankfulness and importunity, prayer unthwarted by cherished sin or unforgiving disposition, is a most powerful factor in character-building.

In *the Word of God* the soul finds food and nourishment. Gather " manna " daily. Be prayerful in approach, reverent in reading, systematic in study, honest in application of all truth revealed. Seek the upbuilding of character, equipment for service, and above all knowledge of God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let obedience attend on the open ear, the receptive mind and the responsive heart.

We read that Jesus went, as His custom was, to the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. Those who would grow in grace will make use of " the means of grace." *The Lord's Day* with its opportunities of rest, recreation and service, and *the Sanctuary* with its invitation to worship afford expression and satisfaction to what is deepest and noblest within us. In *the Sacraments*

of Baptism and the Lord's Supper—both pointing back to the death of our Lord, and to our vital union with Him—we have aids to reflection and holy living. They are of Christ's ordaining, and in them He is near to all who seek Him in sincerity and truth (*Cf.* Romans vi. 1-6; 1 Corinthians xi. 23-26).

" *Labour* is life," said Carlyle : " from the inmost heart of the worker rises his God-given force, the sacred, celestial, Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God." Labour is

> " A blessing now—a curse no more ;
> Since He, whose name we breathe with awe,
> The coarse mechanic vesture wore —
> A poor man, toiling with the poor,
> In labour, as in prayer, fulfilling the same law."
> *Whittier.*

The daily round, the common task call for patience and perseverance, concentration and consecration, the team-spirit, good temper and active sympathy; these and other life-enriching qualities are developed wherever men " work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men " (Colossians iii. 17, 23). The final tragedy of unemployment is not the political or social crises it foments, not even the hunger and privation families suffer, but the awful moral and spiritual deterioration which threaten those denied the opportunity of the discipline of daily toil.

IV.

GROWTH—DISCIPLINE.

SELF-DENIAL. There is a negative as well as a positive side to growth. The grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, else it abides alone. To love life is to lose it; to lose life for Christ's sake and the Gospel's is to find it. Jesus calls us to self-denial, that is, to the abandonment of self as the end of life, the dethronement of self from its sovereignty over life. He offers us a cross, that the old man, with his thoughts, affections, desires and habits may be crucified. He bids us take up the cross *daily*, to give no quarter to self, persistent though it be in its opposition to the Highest. This is not *asceticism*, which is the pursuit of the empty life. It is the renunciation which is coronation of Christ in heart and life. There is nothing morbid in this, rather "a triumphant and enthusiastic air." It means life harmonised, personality unified, the spirit adapted to its native environment which is God.

"TEMPTATION, whether arising from trying circumstances or from incitement to sin, if successfully encountered, leads to progress in the moral life and to blessedness." St. James exhorts his readers to "count it all joy, when they fall into manifold 'temptations,' knowing that the proving of their faith worketh patience." If patience is permitted her perfect work, they will be perfect and entire, lacking nothing. God incites no man to evil; but in the shadow He keepeth watch over His own, so

that they are not " tempted above that they are able," For all of us life is conflict—inner struggle as graphically described by St. Paul (Romans vii.), and pressure from outward suggestion, as in our Lord's temptation (Matthew iv.). In the good fight let us not underestimate the strength of the enemy, think lightly of even the smallest sin, be careless or prayerless like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane. Let us call sin " sin " (Genesis xxxix. 9), and not be misled by jargon filtering down from pseudo-psychology. Let the " expulsive power of a new affection " operate. Trusting in God for strength let us go down into the Valley of Humiliation, and return in the power of the Spirit, more than conqueror.

> " Why comes temptation but for man to meet
> And master and make crouch beneath his foot,
> And so be pedestalled in triumph."
>
> *Browning.*

" Blessed is the man that endureth temptation ; for when he hath been approved, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him " (James i. 12).

SUFFERING. No character touches the highest possible values without experience of failure, pain or sorrow. The sturdy oak is strong, because often in bending before the blast it sent its roots deeper and deeper into the soil. So, in his affliction, the wise man lays hold on the might of God. Suffering which comes of wrong-doing will, if the spirit is humbly responsive, lead to cleansing and renewal. *Unmerited suffering* is a problem. May it not mean our accep-

tance of a share in the tragedy of life, the tragedy in which God, and none so much as He, has a part? We are members one of another, and must be prepared to do our bit in bearing the world's pain. If we *endure* affliction, accept it as opportunity of doing the will of God, we shall find it brings us power and insight, and guides us into patience, understanding and sympathy. The "thorn in the flesh" meant for St. Paul new experience of the grace of God. In measure as we are faithful in our witness to Christ we shall find that "unto us it is given, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake" (Philippians i. 29). Should we be tempted to murmur or complain, let us look unto Jesus, who, as the Captain of our salvation, was made perfect through suffering. "He had no thought that everything that happened to Him was the will of God, but He saw at once in everything the opportunity which was the will of God, and He turned it into gold" (Leslie D. Weatherhead. *Pain and Providence*).

V.

FRUIT.

(*a*) *In the Personal Life.*

The final test of character is its fruitfulness and fruit. That is the test of Christ Himself. Dr. Hetherwick (*The Gospel and the African*, p. 116) says that it is through the instinct for character that the Gospel finds its readiest appeal to the native. When men have been asked, "What was it that first led

you to think of Christ and Christianity ? " they have most frequently replied, " It was Thomas—or James —or Luke," naming some convert whose changed manner of life had stamped itself on their admiration. Life calls to men louder than logic. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

What these fruits are we are plainly told. To the Ephesians Paul writes, " Ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord ; walk as children of light (for *the fruit of the light* is in all goodness and righteousness and truth)" (Ephesians v. 8f.). With greater detail he speaks to the Galatians (v.22), " The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control ; against such there is no law." To these may be added the grace of liberality (Romans xv. 28), and " praise " as " the fruit of the lips " (Hebrews xiii. 15). Some of these qualities were discoveries of Christtianity ; their value is doubted by the world to-day. All of them are essential to full-orbed Christian character, and are expected, not from outstanding " saints " alone, but from all who name the name of Christ. " Christianity is the one religion which has really believed in the common man ; " it has taken of his vernacular and made it the vehicle of the highest truth ; it seeks his soul to make it the reservoir of the highest life.

(*b*) *In Social Relationships.*

The light which has transfigured the Christian's life will reach and transfigure the lives of others. Christian character becomes an organ of God, a

personalised conscience, rebuking the evil-doer, rallying the struggler and reaffirming the eternal principles revealed in the teaching and example of our Lord.

Its first sphere is *the home.* " The saint abroad, the devil at home " is a veritable monstrosity of hypocrisy. Be it sympathetic or unsympathetic, the Christian honours his home. He shares its duties and sacrifices, guards against the things that mar its peace, adds to its gaiety and grace, as did Jesus while He was here among men. The influence of Christian character penetrates the *social circle,* where the contagion of its joy, the optimism of its faith, and the expressions of its love give quality and tone. Many a soul has found Christ in a companionship. *The daily task*—whether in the home or workshop, office or study, school or college, industry or commerce is for it a vocation, a stewardship, a responsibility primarily toward God, then towards man. It is alive to the call of *human need,* eager to give the cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, and to cut channels through which the water of life may flow to the perishing. It is patient with the ignorant and erring, chivalrous to woman, tender to the child, brotherly to all men, even to the proud and self-sufficing. " So your light is to shine before men, that they may see the good you do and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matthew v. 13-16. Moffatt).

VI.

THE LIFE.

Whence comes the power to realise such morality? Humanism claims that man is competent to keep himself in order, and scouts the idea that morality must be based in the infinite and eternal. Since Humanism owes more to Christianity than it is likely to acknowledge, let us get back to pre-Christian morality. *Socrates* was concerned with "man's chief end," which he regarded as the *well-being* which results fron *well-doing* in obedience to the will of God and with the blessing of Heaven. "The philosophy of *Plato* is pre-eminently ethical, and his ethics are remarkably Christian . . . Besides the four virtues as usually classified by Greek moralists —temperance, courage, justice and wisdom—Plato recognised as virtues humility and meekness, which the Greeks generally despised, and holiness, which they ignored; and he insists on the duty of non-retaliation and non-resistance" (Tyler). Yet, in spite of such idealism "ancient morality gave out; based too much on tradition, it was beset by fear; it compromised and declined" (T. R. Glover. *Christ in the Ancient World*, chapter iv.).

How comes it that a wandering Jew, Paul by name, and a handful of Galilean fishermen and the like, preaching these same truths, turn the world upside-down, as their enemies confess? Wherein lay their power to reach, renew, regenerate human life, even the most debased and sunken? Hear Paul:

"I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The force of Christianity is Christ: the life-giving, life-sustaining sap of Christian morality is Christ.

All that Jesus was to men in the days of His flesh He is. He is not a dead memory, but a living Spirit. The Apostles were conscious that He was with them, in them a Spirit, a power, a presence, a personality. He "is the same, yesterday and to-day, yea, and for ever." Not by imitation of Him, but by His abiding inspiration, we grow, we bear fruit to the honour of His name. Let faith have her perfect work; let us climb the mount of transfiguration; then in the valley of human need we shall show, all unconsciously, the qualities of the Christ-filled life, the beauty and power of Christian character.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCRIPTURES.

1.	REVELATION	Exodus iii. 1-6.
2.	INSPIRATION	Numbers xi. 23-29.
3.	THE OLD TESTAMENT ...	Luke xxiv. 25-32.
4.	THE NEW TESTAMENT ...	Jeremiah xxxi. 31-34.
5.	AUTHORITY	Psalm cxix. 9-16.
6.	HAVE YE NOT READ? ...	Mark xii. 1-12, 26.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SCRIPTURES.

I.

REVELATION.

H. G. WELLS wrote a book, " God, the Invisible King ; " then recanted, saying, " There is no such God." He makes, however, this suggestion : " If there is no sympathetic impersonal leader *outside* us, there is at least *in us* the attitude we should adopt towards a sympathetic personal leader." This is an effort to concentrate religious emotion on an imaginary substitute for reality. Mr. H. G. Wood likens it to the melancholy fate of the young man in one of Dickens' novels who falls in love with a barber's dummy, and adds the remark, " Religion without revelation is a hopeless affair."

What H. G. Wells seems to concede is that there is in man that which impels him in search of an infinite. This is true. Even when the pagan rises no higher than the worship of sun, sky or fire, even when he carves a stick or sets up a stone, he is seeking to express his sense of deity ; he is crying out for some satisfying vision, some definite response. The petition of heathenism is, " O Baal, hear us." Man's nature protests against permanent silence. H. G. Wells, Julian Huxley and kindred spirits have heard the cry ; they think it is a good thing, and should be kept up, though by their creed they can offer no hope of an answer.

" Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" asked Zophar of the sorely-troubled Job (Job xi. 7). St. Paul's answer, which seems to be endorsed in the writings of scientific humanism, is that " in the wisdom of God, the world, by (its) wisdom, has attained no (real) knowledge of God " (1 Corinthians i. 21). According to a modern parable, man finds himself set on a little island in a vast expanse of mystery. Science and reason keep exploring the island, but they cannot answer this insatiable curiosity about what lies beyond. They leave him restless, for he feels instinctively that his nature and destiny are somehow bound up with the unknown.

" Revelation is God's breaking through to answer man's need." What man knows about God's nature, mind and will is ' given '—disclosed ere it can be discovered. The highest gift God can bestow on man is the knowledge of Himself. Philip said to Jesus, " Show us the Father, *and it sufficeth us*; " he was philosopher enough to know that the key to life and destiny is in the vision of the Father. To say that God unveils Himself is simply to say that He is merciful and gracious, not willing that any of His creatures should perish.

God comes near in many ways. There is an element of His self-revelation in every true thought, every advance in knowledge and discovery (*cf.* John i. 9). He speaks through *nature*, " for the invisible things of Him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even His everlasting power and divinity " (Romans i. 19f.). But in nature the eye

of man sees only what the mind brings to it. Some have seen merely " nature red in tooth and claw," " the survival of the fittest," a closed system into which God Himself cannot enter. To others

" Earth, with her thousand voices, praises God."

William Watson, in his tribute to Tennyson, *Lacrimæ Musarum*, speaks of

" The eyes that looked through life and gazed on God."

Jesus saw in nature pictures and parables of what God is doing in the higher kingdom of man's spirit.

God is revealed also in *human history and experience*—in all history, and particularly in the history of the Jewish race. The Scriptures record a series of Divine acts. " He made known His ways unto Moses, His doings unto the children of Israel " (Psalm ciii. 7, R.V.). The acts of God are behind the prophets' messages. They speak of a Divine self-unveiling, gradual, progressive, marked by the unity of a redemptive purpose, which found its goal in Jesus Christ, and in the gift of His Spirit to the Church and believers. It is this that makes the witness of the Scriptures unique. In *conscience*, too, the still, small voice of God is heard. Acting upon the power of reason, it inspires a love of truth. It is the sentiment of justice between man and man. It inspires the heart with a love of reality and fidelity. It is the very essence of rectitude—the evidence that God has not left man without a witness to Himself.

II.

INSPIRATION.

The Scriptures are the *record* of God's self-revealing in human history and experience. They are our primary documents, written by persons inspired. *Inspiration* is literally *inbreathing :* it is specifically used of the Divine Breath or Spirit of God. It denotes the process by which the Spirit of God reveals to the spirits of men the nature and will of God.

Man is capable of such inspiration. " There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding " (Job xxxii. 8). Elihu realised that whatever man has of understanding is attributable to the inbreathing of God. In the realm of highest truth every man has capacity for inspiration (John i. 9); some of so much that they become revealers, seers, prophets or apostles.

In the fundamental passage (1 Corinthians ii. 7-16) revelation and inspiration are seen together. The vision of " things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man," is from " the spirit who searcheth the deep things of God." These things the Apostle taught, because, said he, " we have the mind of Christ." Their practical value he emphasises, when writing to Timothy (2 Timothy iii. 16); " Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable." Peter and John give insight into the *psychological processes :* " For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men

spake from God, being moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter i. 21). John says that he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and heard behind him a great voice, as of a trumpet saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last; and, Write what thou seest in a book (Revelations i. 10).

There is another conception, which, since the middle of the seventeenth century, has gradually fastened itself on the Western mind. It substitutes dictation for inspiration. The theory of *verbal inspiration* claims that every written word is as though God Himself had penned it, free from human blemish and discrepancies, historically and scientifically correct. It ignores the fact that the writers are not puppets but men, active, deliberating, often bringing forth in agony of mind and spirit the truth they have received from God. It overlooks the practice of New Testament writers who quote the Old Testament with a freedom which shows that they did not regard the actual words as infallible. Verbal inspiration is now claimed only for "the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, *as originally given.*" This leaves us with the urgent question, what of the Bible as we have it? For nineteen centuries the original documents have been irrecoverable. The allegorical method of interpretation, which the theory encourages, lends itself to caprice. The preacher's business is to expound the word of God, not to read into it, then out of it, his own clever ideas. The Scripture knows nothing of the theory of verbal inspiration; it is man-made. It has proved a stumbling block to eager mind and incipient faith; it has dimmed for multitudes the vision of the nature and purpose of

God. For example of the havoc wrought see *The Autobiography of Mark Rutherford.*

The Scriptures teach that *persons are inspired*, not parchment, that not dictation but inspiration is the method, that the writers are agents, not automatons. Their human qualities are not superseded, but cleansed, strengthened, and "prepared unto every good work." The truth is not conveyed magically, in the actual form in which it is to be set down. *The man is moved* by the Spirit of God. His training and knowledge, his experience of God and man come under the influence of the Spirit who illuminates mind, gives light to the understanding, quickens memory, and brings the whole being into sympathy with the passion and purpose of God. So the writer sees what others do not see; his ear is attuned to messages they do not hear; his mind is alive to interpret what others are "slow of heart" to perceive.

This does not mean that the inspired are clothed with Divine omniscience, or lifted in common knowledge above the thought of their time. They do see and speak eternal truth, and because of that speak to every age. But they speak in the language and under *the limitations of their own age*, leaving it to the generations to come to distinguish under the guidance of the same Spirit between the thought mould and the substance, between the "earthen vessel" and the "treasure." God has unveiled Himelf in history and experience; He has inspired men by His Spirit to convey that revelation in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

III.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The Old Testament is not a book but a library, the finest literary heritage of the Jewish race. It contains thirty-nine books by various authors, belonging to different periods covering ten centuries, or more. *The Title*, The Old Testament, means The Old Covenant; it emphasises the relation between God and His ancient people, Israel. The Jewish classification of the Books was " the Law, the Prophets and the Writings; " the modern grouping is rather " the Historical, the Poetical and the Prophetical." One result of many centuries of careful scholarship is that the date, authorship and original form of the most important books are known. Seeing the books thus in historical perspective, we realise the growth of revelation, or man's growth in understanding of revelation. In the Scriptures, as in nature, the law emphasised by Jesus holds—First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

The earliest conception of the Divine nature within the sphere of revelation is conveyed in *the name*, " God Almighty." " Jehovah " was a later name, expressing the thought of God as independent, faithful, the immutable covenant-keeping One. Then came the idea of God, as the Holy One, just and jealous, yet good and gracious. In the prophetic writings He is designated as the Lord of Hosts, and in the Wisdom literature, as the All-wise. Trace the idea of God in *periods of national development*, in the early

Hebrew religion with its manifestation through angel-pilgrims, dreams, etc.; in the Mosaic period with its holy mountain, fire, thunder, and storm-cloud; in the times of the conquest and the Judges, God marching with the tribes to the destruction of their enemies. Consider what God meant to David, how low at times his thought, at other times how high. Elijah's vindication of Jehovah on Mount Carmel marks a landmark in national progress. The prophetic movement, with its protest against social weakness and impure worship, its demand for real service as against unreal sacrifice, its emphasis upon the holiness of God, is a great advance. The exile and the movements subsequent to the Return, the testing trial of the Maccabean struggle, brought home to the race the spirituality of God. It is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob through all, but what unveiling of the Divine nature there is from the hour when Abraham thought to offer up human sacrifice in the person of his son to the fullness of time when God sent forth His Son to be the Saviour of the world.

The Old Testament was *the Bible of Jesus*. His teaching, full of quotations from it, shows that it was the food of His mind and the comfort of His soul. He saw in its history the preparation for His advent (Luke xxiv. 27). Its very language was dear to Him; He often made it His own. In His use of the Bible He sets us an example. He did not, like St. Paul, bring Rabbinical ingenuity to bear on interpretation (*cf.* Galatians iii. 16; iv.). He went to the heart of the writer and his message, and discovered the eternal word of truth. Compare Matthew ix. 13

and xii. 7 with Hosea vi. 6, or Luke iv. 17-19 with Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, or Mark xii. 29-31 with the unique combination of Deuteronomy vi. 4f. and Leviticus xix. 8. Because He really honoured God's word, *He was no Bibliolater*. He recognised that the Old Testament was incomplete and inadequate; He distinguished between the temporary and the permanent. He announced that it was not to be destroyed but fulfilled, superseded only as when summer supersedes spring, or the noon the dawn.

The Old Testament was also *the Bible of the Primitive Church*.—There was not at first any thought of a distinctively Christian literature. The Salvation secured by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, and His gift to the Church of the Holy Spirit were shown by the earliest witnesses to be the consummation of history, the realisation of what was noblest in the nation's expectation, and the fulfilment of prophecy. The Old Testament was read in a new light; the Law was no longer the heart and soul of Divine revelation, but a pedagogue, a slave-boy to bring men to Christ.

That for the Church through the ages has been *the ultimate significance* of the Old Testament. We read it for its history—the unveiling of God; we read it for its doctrines—God interpreted to us, specially His Providence ruling and over-ruling all; we read it for its ethic—its emphasis on the Divine righteousness, the Divine hatred of sin; we read it for its promises—particularly the promise of a Redeemer to be manifested to take away sin.

IV.

THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The New Testament is the record of a great historic movement—the coming of Christ as a historic personality, summing up the past and opening a new era. The prophets, as "mouthpieces for God," had a vision of a New Testament or Covenant to be established, a Kingdom of God in the hearts of individual men. With that idea Jesus directly linked the movement which He came to inaugurate. The record of this fresh beginning in human history bears the title *The New Testament.*

The earliest writings were letters from the Apostles and earliest preachers to their converts and friends in the churches which they had formed. These number about fifteen; their dates fall between twenty and thirty-five years after the death and resurrection of Christ. Moule's classification (*The Modern Readers' Bible for Schools*) is simple and suggestive :—

The Missionary Epistles of St. Paul (Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans);

The Epistles of St. Paul's Imprisonment (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians);

Last Epistles of St. Paul (1 Timothy, Titus, 2 Timothy).

Miscellaneous Epistolary Literature (Hebrews, James, 1 Peter, 2 Peter, Jude, 1, 2 and 3 John);

The Revelation of St. John.

Meantime the necessity of reducing to writing

for the generations to come the story of Jesus was becoming urgent. There were many efforts, as St. Luke tells us in his preface (Luke i. 1-4). Of these four have come down to us. *The Gospel of Mark :* Historic Memoirs (about A.D. 70). *The Wisdom Gospel of Matthew* and the *Gospel of Luke the Historian* (between A.D. 75 and 90). " Matthew and Luke," says Canon Streeter, " besides incorporating the greater part of Mark, seem to have had access to at least three ancient and independent sources. Of these, " Q " may well have been a Greek translation of an Aramaic work of the Apostle Matthew, and on any view it is of great antiquity. The other two sources may reasonably be supposed to represent the traditions current in Jerusalem and Cæsarea respectively about A.D. 60." Luke seems familiar with " A Journey of Travel "—see Luke ix. 51 to xviii. 14., all peculiar to Luke. The Philosophical *Gospel of St. John* was written before 115 A.D.

There were other writings read in the churches, *e.g.*, *The Epistle of St. Clement* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*, but the general Christian consciousness gradually reached the decision to make the New Testament, as we have it, the " rule " or *canon.* (*Canon* is a rod which has been measured and tested, and which then becomes a standard for measuring and testing other things). The Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul were recognised by the middle of the second century ; Hebrews, 2 Peter, Jude and the Revelation later. By the fourth century the New Testament commended itself to the general mind of the Church. No attempt of a formal kind has been made to reverse that judgment.

"For Christians," says Professor Peake, "the New Testament must remain the most precious book in literature. It records for us the final stage of that great self-disclosure of God to Israel which found its consummation in Jesus. It presents Him as the supreme revelation of God to man, and as the Saviour of the world . . . It discloses the loftiest conception of God, in which holiness and majesty are blended with a love and grace which did not shrink from the uttermost sacrifice . . . It declares the value of the human soul and how dear it is to God. It interprets for us the significance of Christ's death. It is not simply the source of information, but the supreme standard for Christian thought and for Christian life."

V.

AUTHORITY.

The question in the minds of many to-day is, "What is the Authority of the Bible?" *Science* has opened up fields of knowledge hidden from those who wrote the Scriptures. Astronomy, geology, biology, archæology, and comparative religion give results at variance with Scripture, a fact which the rationalist has not been slow to emphasise. The Bible was not given to teach us science. Its science is the popular science of the time in which it was written. The writers were not required to anticipate the Copernican theory, the testimony of the rocks, the theory of evolution, relativity or other hypotheses of modern science. The Bible is authoritative within the scope of its real purpose, which is to furnish man

with the revelation of God in His redeeming grace. The religion which rests on a historical basis is unaffected by findings of physical science.

Another disturbing factor for many has been *Biblical Criticism.* Biblical Criticism is of three kinds:

(*a*) *Lower or Textual Criticism.* This is concerned with the text of Scripture; its aim is to restore the text to a form as nearly as possible identical with that in which it left the author's hand.

(*b*) *Higher Criticism* examines problems of date and authorship, makes analysis of composite works into the sources from which they have been compiled.

(*c*) *Historical and Literary Criticism* investigates the whole background—the peoples, their history, language, customs, traditions, and environment—in the light of greatly increased knowledge now available.

Professor Deissmann has spoken wise words about Biblical criticism. " This has meant *a great danger* to the New Testament, the same danger that happens to a flower when a learned man plucks it and puts it in a herbarium . . . That which comes from the mind of the saints in the sunny East, in the open air and sunlight, is exiled to the wooden tables and Osram lamps of Western authorities. But there is," he says, " *another side.* Scholarship has often cut a way into the heart of the little book through the labyrinth of tradition. It has restored the original text and has led us back to the sources. It has protected the Holy Book from fanatics, legalists, and confused thinkers. ' The old tongues are the sheaths in which the knife

of the spirit is put,' said Goethe, and scholarship has often been this knife that has cut to the truth." (*The Testament in the Light of Modern Research*).

One who had given a lifetime's study to this science—J. Armitage Robinson—*Some Thoughts on Inspiration*—bore this witness, "Brethren, we have not lost our faith. We move fearlessly forward towards the growing light of a larger day; confident that the Bible will always prove its own inherent power; that its further study will reveal its deeper truth; that as the human element is more clearly ascertained its Divine element will be more intelligibly recognised; remembering always that *it claims an authority over the human spirit* such as no other book can claim, and that by our use of it, or our neglect of it, we shall be judged in the day when God calls us to our account."

Has the Divine unveiling ceased with the creation of the New Testament? God reveals Himself in and through every life that is surrendered to Him. The artist, the poet and the preacher may know, if they seek it, the cleansing and consecration of the live coal from off the altar. The perpetual presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church is the guarantee that *inspiration will not cease.* But the standard will ever be the revelation of God given in the person and mission of Jesus Christ. It will take all eternity to explore with all saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Poet, artist, prophet may bring us *more of Christ;* they can never bring us *more than Christ.*

VI.

HAVE YE NOT READ?

Are we a Bible-loving people? The following paragraphs are from *The Teaching of English in England*, the report of a Departmental Committee appointed by the President of the Board of Education, 1921 :—

"We have three plain facts before us. First, the Authorised Version, though a translation from an eastern original, is a true part of English literature —has, indeed, been fitly described as "the most majestic thing in our literature, and the most spiritually living thing we inherit." Second, it is historically true that for five centuries and more no other English book has been so widely read in this island or so closely connected with our national life, or has left so strong a mark upon the mass of our literature. Third, at the present time the Bible is probably less widely read and less directly influential in our life and literature than it has been at any time since the Reformation." . . . "Reading is no doubt more common; we are on the way to becoming a reading nation; but we are continually less and less familiar with the one great piece of literature which for centuries gave something of a common form, a common dignity, to the thought and speech of the people" (341-342).

This is a serious indictment, coming, as it does, from a body entirely free from ecclesiastical obsession or panic. The nation that ceases to be interested

in the record of God's word will cease from vision; the people that have no vision perish. Let us be ourselves faithful students of the Word, avoiding all manner of obscuranticism and insincerity, and wrestling with truth even to the breaking of the day. Every tunnel has two ends, entry and exit; so with doubt, where a man is faithful in his search for truth. Let preparation be prayerful, approach reverent, study systematic, dependent on the leading of the inspiring Spirit; let the will to do chime with the desire to know; let the motive be love of Christ and passion for the extension of His kingdom; in such fashion keep your vow. "*I will read the Bible every day.*" Interest others in God's Word, in the wonder of its structure and the secret of its power. So will you strengthen your own soul, and prepare a highway for your God.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVANGEL.

1. THE WORD EVANGEL ... Mark i. 1-15.
2. THE ESSENCE ... ... 1 Cor. xv. 1-11.
3. ITS EFFECTIVENESS ... Romans i. 1-17.
4. PROCLAMATION ... ... Isaiah lv. 1-13.
5. APOLOGETIC ... ... 1 John ii. 1-11.
6. EVANGELISATION ... ... Acts i. 1-11.

CHAPTER IX.

THE EVANGEL.

I.

THE WORD EVANGEL.

JOHN RUSKIN has many wise things to say about the art of reading, this among them: "First of all, I tell you, earnestly and authoritatively . . you must get into the habit of looking intensely at words, and assuring yourself of their meaning, syllable by syllable —nay, letter by letter." Words, like coins, tend to become worn with use. The image of truth, so bright and sharply defined when first they are minted, gradually loses in distinctiveness and in the power to attract or hold attention. Just such a word is *Evangel.*

It comes to us from the Greek, and is found in the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) and in the New Testament. Its meaning is *Good News.* Let us illustrate from two well-known Old Testament passages:

> "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth *good tidings*, that publisheth peace, that bringeth *good tidings* of good, that publisheth salvation" (Isaiah lii. 7).

The prophet sees in vision the redemption of the prisoners consequent on the fall of Babylon. The tidings are being carried to Jerusalem, over the mountains to the north of the city; in his ecstasy the prophet

exclaims that the feet of the messengers are lovely, as they approach. It is the message which makes the arrival so welcome; it is evangel—good news.

In the other passage the herald himself speaks:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach *good tidings* unto the meek" (Isaiah lxi. 1).

Conscious of the unction of the Spirit of Jehovah upon him, he is come to cheer and comfort the distressed, to announce the end of the captivity and the dawn of peace.

The passage which gives the word *Evangel* value for the Christian is Mark i. 14, "Jesus came into Galilee, *preaching the Gospel of God*"—the good news of which God is the Author and Sender. The manner of His preaching is not described by Mark, but Luke gives a vivid picture (Luke iv. 17-21). Jesus at Nazareth stood up in the synagogue, and reading from the sacred scroll handed to Him, said,

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to proclaim *good news* to the poor" (Weymouth),

adding, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears." The poor and needy were quick to discover that it was so; they flocked to His ministry; "the common people heard Him gladly."

Having the Master's seal upon it, the word *evangel* caught and fired the imagination of St. Paul. It occurs no less than sixty times in his Epistles. He describes himself as an apostle "*separated unto the Gospel of God*" (Romans i. 1). The appearance of Christ's messengers on the scene of history was to him the fulfilment of the prophet's dream, "as it is

written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring glad tidings of good" (Romans x. 15). They announce the end of the captivity of sin, and publish peace made by Christ, and proclaim the blessings which God in Christ bestows on the redeemed.

To a world grown weary of paganism, grown sick of its corruptions, grown jaded almost beyond the possibility of fresh excitement, to an age mocked, for lack of moral power, by its high philosophies, and become sceptical or superstitious in the conviction, "Great Pan is dead," the advent of Christ's messengers meant hope, for they brought an evangel—good news.

II.

ITS ESSENCE.

Ours, too, is a bewildered age, though it may not be flying the same flags of distress. Canon Streeter, in *The God Who Speaks*, says:

"Our world is like an Atlantic liner deprived of rudder, compass, sextant, charts, and wireless tackle, yet compelled to go full steam ahead. There is magnificence, comfort, pulsating power; but whither are we going? . . . Is there available for man, if he so will, guidance on his dark and dangerous course?" In other words, Is there Gospel, good news for him? The Spirit and the Church say, Yes.

In *The Evangelical Church Catholic* Dr. P. Carnegie Simpson shows just what is needed. The Gospel, he says, must answer two questions: One is, the question of the character of God, including His

relation to man; the other, the meaning of life, including its deliverance from that which threatens to destroy and defeat it. About the *existence of God* Science is gradually coming to more positive findings, but the human heart cries out for far more than Science or Philosophy can hope to offer. It must know about *His nature and His attitude* towards the sons of men. The answer is made by the Christian faith. It has at its core the message that Jesus is the Redeemer of the world and the Saviour of the soul. The earliest gospel was not the life of Jesus but the proclamation of salvation. The Cross was central. Paul said, "I delivered unto you that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried; and that He hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians xv. 3f.). This is the supreme fact and the most energetic force of the Christian Gospel. For in the Cross Jesus answers our questions about God. "Neither Paul nor Christ says that this awful death was to touch the heart of God to mercy, and to move Him to pity us. God loves saint and sinner alike; He so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; the love was the origin of the Coming and Death of Christ, not the effect of it" (Dale).

The Gospel faces up to *the facts of human life*, the mystery, trouble and sorrow which overshadow the human lot, and the moral poison which has infected human nature. Men seldom use the word *sin* to-day, but this is not to say that they are not bothering about it. They have found other names, other explanations; but however they explain it or name

it, the thing is there, and not by moral effort, intellectual culture, or influence of materialistic civilisation can it be expelled from the soul or from the body politic. Sick and self-banished from God, the man of to-day needs news, the kind of news that makes an "incurable" leap for joy that discovery has been made of a remedy which will restore him to health and usefulness. He needs an evangel of forgiveness, release and victory over sin; that is the essence of the Gospel which proclaims the Crucified One who ever liveth to make intercession for the transgressor.

III.

ITS EFFECTIVENESS.

Is this Gospel efficacious? Does it not tend to become effete with the passing of the years?

(*a*) Consider the *many-sidedness* of the Gospel. Look at the men who became Jesus' elect pupils, whom He called to be with Him that He might send them forth as His messengers. What variety of temper and disposition they reveal! Not one disciple reminds us of another; their natures differ as do their countenances. "Peter is forward and self-assertive; Andrew keeps in the background and is never obtrusive. James is like a volcano; Nathaniel is like a quiet summer pool. Some, like John, are always leaning on the Master and trustfully following; others are trying to push Him on, and sometimes going first. Philip always looks before he leaps; Peter leaps before he looks. Thomas doubts and desponds, and is slow to believe any good thing; others believe all things without question. The varieties, even the

contrasts, are most striking. They were not only twelve men, but twelve types . . . In these twelve Jesus had the whole human family" (Greenhough. *The Apostles of our Lord.* 22f.). How came it that Simon the Zealot, the dagger-man-patriot, shook hands and sat at meat with Matthew the publican? Because their common Leader and Lord said to each, "Follow Me," "Abide in Me." He gave to this group its unity and life, while not suppressing the essential individuality of any disciple.

The same infinite variety is demonstrated on a world-wide scale. Max Müller drew attention to the significant fact that the word *humanity* does not appear in Plato or Aristotle. He claimed that the science of mankind and of the languages of mankind would never, without Christianity, have sprung into birth, and that the real date of the beginning of language study is the Day of Pentecost. To-day the evangel is read in eight hundred tongues, and it finds response, for "He who gives the Word for the world prepares the world for the Word."

"Didn't I tell you there ought to be a God like that," said an old woman in Africa when she first heard the Gospel. The manifoldness of the Gospel is reflected in John's notable vision (Revelation vii. 9ff.). "After these things I saw, and behold, a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne, and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying,

"Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

(*b*) The adequacy and efficiency of the Evangel is seen also in *its Power*. " For I am not ashamed of the Gospel," said St. Paul, even as he thought of the might of the Imperial City, " for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Think again of the disciple band, poor material to the outward eye, not the class that Plato or Aristotle would have encouraged, very " ordinary clay " in the hands of the potter. Listen to their talk, their disputes, their questions; mark their errors of thought, the prejudice of their outlook, their faults of temper and vanity. The crises of discipleship found them far from courageous; panic drove them into cowardice. They were self-seeking and ambitious, at least in their thoughts of the coming kingdom. See what grace wrought! They became twelve of the noblest, most fearless, most serviceable men who have appeared in history. They became the salt of the earth and the light of the world, multiplying the influence of Christ in the world ten thousand-fold. Christ gave to them a grandeur and moral splendour which men will ever associate with their names.

His touch has still its ancient power; no word from Him can fruitless fall. Look abroad, and you find that the lame walk, the deaf hear, the lepers are cleansed, the blind receive their sight, the dead are raised, whole communities are transformed; where there was cruelty and lust there is justice and purity; there is the uplift of womanhood, the joy of true home-life, the child set in the midst; the world has new social ideals, new moral standards, and a longing for true brotherhood. This testimony comes from the mission fields. What a spate of testimony literature

of Gospel success here at home we have seen in the last decade. In the slums of our great cities, on the Thames embankment, on Tower Hill, by the regular ministry of the Church, by our great Central Halls, by the Salvation Army and kindred organisations, the evangel is proclaimed, souls are saved, home-life is cleansed and enriched, and the social conscience quickened to activity.

IV.

PROCLAMATION.

If the Evangel is Good News for the world, it calls for publicity. The Apostolic Church understood this, and gave itself right bravely to the task. This ministry is called *preaching*. In one of his sermons (Isaiah lv. 1) Dr. Alexander Maclaren says, "The meaning of the word *preach* is 'proclaim like a herald;' or, what is perhaps more familiar to most of us, like a town-crier; with a loud voice, clearly and plainly delivering the mesage. Now there are other notions of a sermon than that . . . but my business now is to preach, . . to ring out like a bellman the message which I believe God has given me for you."

St. Paul, in one of his early epistles, makes play on the word as it was used in the Stadium; "lest, after making proclamation to others, as *a herald at public games*, I myself be rejected as a disqualified competitor" (1 Corinthians ix. 27). The herald at the Games summoned the competitors and announced the rules of the contest. We know that the Apostle was not disqualified, for in his latest

epistles he describes himself on two occasions as " a herald and apostle and teacher" (1 Timothy ii. 7; 2 Timothy i. 11. Moffatt). He started out as a herald; at the close of the day he recognises that he has had to play other and important parts, but he sets first and foremost his work of heralding the glad tidings.

Professor C. H. Dodd (*The Apostolic Preaching and its Developments*) reminds us that the New Testament makes a clear distinction between preaching and teaching. Preaching was very definitely public proclamation of Christianity to a heathen world. While the Christian Church was concerned to hand on the teaching of the Lord, it was not by this it made converts. It was by preaching, not teaching, says Paul, that it pleased God to save men. The Gospel must be proclaimed, whether men hear or forbear, for in the Gospel—the Good News—will be found the power of God unto salvation.

The Report of the Archbishops' Committee on Evangelistic Work said truly, " If the Church is to preach in this generation an Evangel which will grip, it must come in some real sense as news—news powerful enough to change the whole mental and spiritual outlook." The Gospel *is* news for every generation, and must be presented as such. The revivalistic currency, say of D. L. Moody's time, must be reminted—the substance the same, for the Evangel is eternal truth, but the coinage bearing image and superscription that this age can see and appreciate. To go on repeating worn-out shibboleths, as though it was in these that the power lay, is fatal folly. It is not preaching; it is not heralding good *news*. It is not even " cauld kail het again; " it is simply cauld kail.

From close and intimate communion with Christ, the leaders of yesterday came forth with *a message which was news* to the world, because it made men to see Christ as they had never seen Him before. The true prophet is a seer, a man who is himself transformed by what he has seen. He lives at the fountain-head of truth. His news then can never be stale. Given to-day and received to-day, it is for to-day, to be presented in the thought-mould of to-day and in language that the man of to-day can readily understand.

It is said of James G. Blaine, who in the Hall of the House of Representatives, February 27th, 1882, made the oration over Garfield, the murdered President of the United States, that he compelled his audience to forget the speaker, " to lose sight of his individuality, to cease to hear his voice, and to become *wholly engrossed in the subject itself.* In his oration over Garfield he sinks himself wholly in the character of the man he eulogizes, and without once confessing himself, voices his own deepest nature in defining the intellectual and moral nature of his friend." Such oratory was *news*, for in J. G. Blaine, Garfield, being dead, spoke again. When the preacher has lost himself in Christ, when his audience sees no man save Jesus only, when the living Lord clothes Himself in the preacher's personality, the world will have news, Evangel, such as it had at Pentecost. There will be no need for novelties, for the dazzling, irregular flares of sensationalism and stuntism, for in such preaching men will have recognised the dawn, the rising of the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his beams.

V.

APOLOGETIC.

Phillips Brooks defined preaching as "the communication of truth by man to men. It has in it two elements, *truth and personality*." Suppose the truth is written in the sky, or embodied in a book, that is not preaching. On the other hand, if men speak to make other men listen to their speculations, or to do their will, or to applaud their cleverness, that is not preaching either. "Preaching is the bringing of truth through personality." Let us therefore turn from the heralding to the herald, from the sermon to the preacher. For, however the Gospel may be capable of statement in dogmatic form, *its truest statement*, its finest apologetic, is in personal life. Christianity is Christ; He can be best expressed in consecrated personality, in character revealing itself by Christlike conduct.

If this be so, preaching is a daily art to which every Christian is called. Life in Christ is a vocation. It is not merely that actions speak louder than words, they *preach* louder than words. Peter stood up with the eleven on the Day of Pentecost and preached; but not these alone, all the hundred and twenty shared the gift of the Holy Spirit, all were called to be witnesses unto Christ.

This reminds us of the value which God in Christ has set upon personality. We have our scales of value; how they differ from the Divine! "*What was he worth?*" we ask concerning the deceased, and

we expect an answer in terms of hard cash. One of our hymns insists on another valuation—"Only remembered by what we have done." But neither the money we leave, nor the achievements we set on record, are the real measure of our worth. That lies in *what we are*. "But by the grace of God I am what I am," says St. Paul (1 Corinthians xv. 10), thereby acknowledging that Grace is concerned with the real man, the essential self.

Jesus recognised the worth of the individual as such. Even the most sacred institutions, including the Sabbath Day, were for man, not man for them. *The intrinsic worth of man* rests on his filial relationship to God. This reckoning made Jesus assert the moral rights of woman, and set the child in the midst. He declared in face of the strictest convention that even the sinner has infinite worth in the sight of God. Men reproached Him because He was the "friend of publicans and sinners." His answer was given in the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, the lost son, the loss bringing pain to the heart of the Father, the recovery unspeakable joy.

> "All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> This was I worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped."

The tragedy of human life is that sin has claimed human personality, that self has reigned.

But personality has new value, because of what took place on Calvary. There Christ died to redeem it. In the year 410 or 412 A.D. a new governor went to Tripoli and began to exploit the people. The bishop

Synesius wrote to him and said, "You treat man as if he were cheap. Man is not a cheap thing, but a precious thing, *for whom Christ died.*" This thought was not original to Synesius making his brave protest —a protest much needed to-day. He had it from St. Paul. A weak brother can be a great bother, and Paul feared lest the Roman Christians might get just a little impatient, a little harsh; so he gave them this rule, "Do not let that food of yours ruin the man for whom Christ died" (Romans xiv. 15). That is the last word, where the worth of man is concerned.

When personality is surrendered to the risen and exalted Christ it enters on the path of full and effective development. Truly to follow Christ is not to hinder, but in the highest sense, to promote self-realisation. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have *the light of life.*" This enriching and enlarging experience breaks down barriers and hindrances, and sweeps the soul into freedom and power. The whole personality undergoes transformation; it becomes a vessel meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work. It is fitted to be the vehicle of truth, not merely to speak the truth, but to be truth in every relation and in all conduct. To an age which is not lacking in ideals but in the power to carry them out a radiant and victorious life is Gospel, good news. There is no authority like the authority of character, no preaching so effective as the Gospel according to you and me and all who truly live for Christ.

VI.

EVANGELISATION.

There can be no true thought of the Evangel which does not visualise its universal sweep. It was not the will of Christ that the fire He came to kindle should be confined to a solitary altar in Jerusalem. His last recorded words are, " *and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.*" The deliberate and inspired action of the Church at Antioch, in setting apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary enterprise, marked a fresh beginning in world history. Eusebius shows how men pioneered with the Gospel :—

> " Setting out on long journeys they performed the duty of evangelists, being eager to preach Christ to those who have never heard anything of the word of faith, and to pass on to them the scripture of the Divine Gospels. These men were content with simply laying the foundations . . . and then appointed others as pastors, entrusting them with the husbandry of those newly-reclaimed, while they themselves went on again to other countries with the grace and co-operation of God."

The world's redemption hangs on soul-winning. Every Christian ought to be a soul-winner and every church a soul-winning organisation. This vision " would save the ministry from the frozen zone of a powerless pulpit," and save our churches from being cosy clubs for comfortable Christians.

Gladstone at one period of his life was powerfully impressed by world-need. " My mind involuntarily reverts to the sad and solemn conviction that a fearfully great portion of the world around me is dying in sin." The Church of Jesus Christ has the evangel, the good news of a Saviour come to rescue and release men from the guilt and power of sin. It needs but the spirit of evangelism to supply the link between the needy world and the seeking Saviour. We supply it, or we perish, for the Church lives by conquest, not by natural increase of population. We supply it, only when, and as we yield to the constraining love of Christ, and feel the urge of His evangel to radiant holiness of character and to sacrificial passion of service. Our marching orders are, " Go ye into all the world to the whole creation." Let us not hesitate but obey.

CHAPTER X.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

1.	THE BACKGROUND ...	John iii. 1-12.
2.	THE FOUNDER	Luke iv. 18-21.
3.	THE MEANING	Luke xii. 22-34.
4.	INWARD YET OUTWARD	Matthew xviii. 1-6.
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6.	THE CHURCH	Matthew xviii. 15-20.

CHAPTER X.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

I.

THE BACKGROUND.

"THE Kingdom of God" is a New Testament phrase, but the idea permeates the whole of the Old Testament. The majestic opening of the Book of Genesis, "in the beginning God," reveals God as Sovereign over all creation. The testimony of the historical books of the Bible is to Jehovah as the moral Governor of the universe. In the prophecies there are glimpses of a higher kingdom—"the kingdom of light and love."

The Jews traced kingdom-origins back to God's dealings with Abraham. The exodus from Egypt and the consolidation of the Hebrew slaves into a nation were momentous developments. With the establishment of the Monarchy an earthly ruler was given to be the visible representative of the invisible King; but this ideal was soon forgotten. The prophets pointed away from a tottering throne to a coming King, a son of David, a conquering hero, a ruler of justice and peace in God's holy mountain, a hiding place from the wind and a covert from the tempest, a shepherd who should feed his flock. With

ever-increasing distinctness the Figure emerges, till the lineaments of the Suffering Servant of Jehovah are seen—an aspect little appreciated or understood by the Jews and their rulers.

In the critical centuries which separate the history of Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, from the fullness of time when God sent His Son, the nation passed through testing crises. The attempt of Antiochus Epiphanes to root out Jewish religion was defeated by the heroic revolt led by the Maccabees; but, in the reaction which followed, the religious life and aspirations of Israel were driven more and more into nationalistic channels. Prophecy died low; the Book of the Law became an idol; and human merit was the ideal and end of Israel's striving.

In that age, Apocalypse became a vehicle of revelation. In contrast to the prophet the apocalyptist was a writer rather than a preacher, a seer rather than an actor on the stage of the nation's life. He despaired of the times, regarded the world as hopelessly corrupt, and looked for a day when God should ring down the curtain and Himself intervene in dramatic fashion to make a new beginning. An Old Testament example of Apocalypse is the Book of Daniel, which foretells the overthrow of God's enemies and the establishment of a kingdom of saints, wherein sin will be abolished and a reign of righteousness begun; the righteous dead of Israel will be raised to eternal glory, and the wicked to shame. These Apocalypses reveal faith in its refusal either to acquiesce in things as they are, or to believe that God acquiesces. They were designed to strengthen conviction in the final and absolute triumph of Jehovah.

By such stages the kingdom idea grew, till at last the rugged prophet, John the Baptist, appeared. He came in the spirit and power of Elijah, and fanned Messianic expectation into a flame. A herald and forerunner, he announced that the long-expected kingdom was at hand. He required of the people confession of sin and repentance. His vivid metaphors—burning chaff, winnowing fan, and the axe laid to the root of the tree—are pictures of judgment and echoes of apocalyptic. He taught that would-be seekers must bring forth fruits meet for repentance. None can claim exemption on the grounds of hereditary rights or national privilege. The Jewish rulers looked askance on such revolutionary teaching; they ignored the sacrament of baptism for the remission of sins; but the common people flocked to Jordan's waters. "The Kingdom" was on everybody's lips. "It was a fluid ideal, taking now one shape and now another, according to the temper of the individual." To the aged Simeon, who "waited for the consolation of Israel," it was a means of grace and spiritual blessing; to the hot-headed Zealots, a mere expedient for securing national independence and material good.

II.

The Founder.

Into this arena of confused thought and hope Jesus came preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom. We do not know when He was first conscious of the call to Messiahship, but the voice which He heard

at the Baptism can have left Him little doubt. Its message, "This is my Son, the Unique; in Him is my delight," plainly declared Him to be the Messiah sent for the salvation of His own people and of the sinful human race.

The Anointing at the Baptism was followed by the Ordeal. Urged to use His new-found powers for personal ends, He chose to accept the limitations of ordinary humanity. Tempted to presume on His unique relation to the Father, He preferred the way of humble faith open to all men. Given the opportunity of easy success by compromise, He held to the road that led to Calvary. Not by becoming bread-king, sensation-monger, or Cæsar-over-all, would He reign. His kingdom was not of this world, and was not to be established by the methods of this world. The prince of this world came again and again, but found nothing in Him. Though tempted in all points, like as we are, He was yet without sin.

The Charter of the Kingdom was announced in the Synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 18ff.). Having read from Isaiah 61 1ff., Jesus said, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." Thereafter the Kingdom was the theme of His message; "I must preach the Kingdom of God in other cities also, for therefore am I sent" (Luke iv. 43). His use of the title, Son of Man, as His favourite name for Himself, doubtless had a Messianic significance. "It is employed when Christ's claims to power and authority are asserted, both now and in His future Kingdom and glory;" also to show that "He that has come to serve, suffer, and give His life a ransom for many, will pass through agony and death to His

place of exaltation in the clouds of heaven." The claim to the name Son of God, though not so frequent, is equally plain (Matthew xi. 27; xviii. 35; xx. 23; Cf. Mark xii. 26). It was confirmed by the Voice at the Baptism. Peter's use of the title gladdened the soul of the Master (Matthew xvi. 16).

Men were strangely conscious of an authority in the bearing and teaching of Jesus. A striking example is seen in His cleansing of the Temple. The traders and money-changers fled from before Him; the responsible priests could do no more than ask, "What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things?" (John ii. 16). St. John tells how on one occasion officers were sent by the Sanhedrin to arrest Him. They came back empty-handed, with the strange excuse, "Never man so spake." When they approached Him with the intention of fulfilling their duty, He talked with them and His grace conquered them. Their souls had bowed before Him, and they durst not lay hands upon Him.

His authority was seen, too, in His words which convinced earnest seekers that they were at the fountain-head, not drinking from a carried pitcher. His reverence for God and man evoked reverence. His claim to fulfil, by superseding, the written Law, and His ringing "But I say unto you," marked Him either as an arch-impostor or as one with even greater authority than Moses the Law-giver.

The sovereignty of Jesus extended into the spiritual realm. To the paralytic He said, "Child, thy sins are forgiven thee," adding later, "The Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins." The

Divine love that dwelt in Jesus made forgiveness not only credible to sinners, but real. He led them beyond mere promise or vague hope to an actual experience. The burden passed from their conscience, and they were made whole.

It was a sovereign constraint to which men answered when they became His disciples. At His bidding they left all and followed Him, for their souls turned to Him as the needle to the pole. They discovered in Jesus not only the founder, but the vital germ, the living embodiment and representative of the Kingdom, the actual type of the new relationship to God into which they were invited to enter. Not all accepted His invitation. Some even mocked His claims. They crowned Him with thorns, smote Him with a reed-sceptre, and over the wounds caused by scourging threw a purple cloak, crying, All hail! Never was Christ more kingly than in those hours. On the cross they nailed His claim above Him in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. Little did His enemies know that He was opening the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers.

III.

The Meaning.

When Matthew describes the Kingdom, he calls it "the Kingdom of Heaven." No distinction of meaning can fairly be drawn between the two expressions, the Kingdom of Heaven and Kingdom of God. In the interests of reverence *Heaven* was often substituted for the sacred name, *Jehovah* (Luke v. 21).

The expressions may denote on the one hand that the Kingdom is God's, and on the other that it is heavenly in its origin, aims and end.

Jesus gave no definition of the Kingdom. Indeed, there is no definition which includes all phases of the truth. We cannot be certain that the meaning throughout the Gospels is constant. Generally, the thought is " the rule of God," whether in the human heart or in society. In Rabbinical literature it meant " the sovereignty of God." In the New Testament " kingly rule " may on almost every occasion be substituted. The emphasis is on *rule* rather than *realm.*

Even without any formal definition from the Master, we may judge that He took the popular term and poured into it content which was in sharp contrast to popular ideals. The forward looking patriotism of the Jews visualised a Messiah who should deliver the Nation from the dominion of Rome. Judas, the Galilean, and others raised the standard of revolt, calling upon the people to refuse tribute to the Emperor and to recognise Jehovah alone as their ruler. They drew away some of the people after them but they perished, and all, as many as obeyed them, were scattered abroad (Cf. Acts v. 37). The glamour of the ideal held the people, despite repeated failures. Subsequent to the feeding of the five thousand, the crowd would have hurried Jesus to coronation at Jerusalem. His disciples kept dreaming for long of thrones and honours and high places. Even after the Resurrection, they came, asking, " Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel ? "

In the face of such prejudice and preconceived notions, Jesus showed wonderful patience and forbearance. He was working for eternity, not for the passing moment. His method was that of the Sower whose field is the world, whose seed is the Word of God, and whose strength is to wait for and expect harvest. Men to-day complain that He did not inveigh against specific evils—Cæsarism, slavery, war—not recognising that He was no fanatical iconoclast, but a dropper of living seed. It is in the fruition of the seed that we come to see what Jesus meant by "the Kingdom," not by easy definitions which allow truth to be duly pigeon-holed.

IV.

Inward Yet Outward.

The Kingdom of God is inward and spiritual. It moves life at its circumference, because it first captures the centre. Its primary seat is the heart. The condition of seeing and entering the Kingdom is *the New Birth.* "Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the Kingdom of God" (John iii. 3). "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of heaven" (Matthew xviii. 3). "If we are to live in Christ's Kingdom, we must have His quality. That is the point which many people have missed, as they study the Sermon on the Mount; and that is why the principles laid down there, and the line of conduct suggested, appear so hard to follow—even to some, so impossible. To fulfil them demands a new kind

of character, a fresh type of man." (James Reid. *The Key to the Kingdom*, page 18.)

The Kingdom, then, is something *given*. The initiative is with Divine grace. It is not something which can be wrought up by the will of man, or by human enthusiasm, however keen and kindly. "It cometh not with observation;" it is unseen and spiritual and is from above. Much of the humanism of our time is based on the assumption that if only men can be aroused to see, on the one hand, the need and, on the other, the ideal and the resources, they will rise in their might and cry, "It shall be done." It does not allow for the native inertia of the human heart, the fearful grip of habit on the life, and the powerful vigilance of vested interests. Man requires for his salvation a power from without which, entering into his life, will strengthen him to overcome these hostile forces, and set him gloriously free to realise citizenship within the kingdom of God. Jesus said to His followers, "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to *give* you the Kingdom." God first calls us to a wise passiveness, to an eager receptiveness, that the flowing tide of His grace may sweep into our lives, cleansing and renewing; then He offers us the power which the tides, when harnessed, supply to any good work.

The life which begins in a wise passivity does not end at that. Experience of the Divine grace begets the strenuous temper, which is so necessary for the development of character. The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hid in a field, or a pearl of great price, for which a man will sell all. It is the finest adventure life has to offer, the supreme call to the heroic. It

means a readiness to crucify the lethargic, indulgent, self-centred self, and a willingness to dedicate oneself, the utmost for the Highest. Men only begin to live, in the best sense of that word, when they answer the call of the King, and honour His rule within them.

This does not imply that the Kingdom has no outward manifestation. It must express itself, and take outward form. True, Jesus did not concern Himself much with organisation or ritual. He pictured no ideal commonwealth as Plato did when he gave his disciples *The Republic.* Jesus was concerned with the things that abide, with principles which determine, according to the needs of each age, the adequate form. Jesus did lay emphasis on the social side of human life. The rule of God challenges every human relationship in every age—in home and school, in business and leisure, in commerce and industry, in matters civic, national and international. When we sing, " Crown Him Lord of all," we pray not merely that Jesus will reign where'er the sun doth his successive journeys run, but that He will reign in every department of life, personal and corporate. The regeneration of society through the regeneration of the individual is the ultimate Christian ideal—a changed world through changed lives. " Christ dealt with individuals in the sanctuary of their individual personality, but He met them there that He might bring them forth equipped for the spacious life of a brotherhood. It was to a kingdom He called them, in which he was to be the greatest citizen who had learned best how to love, and how to serve." (Ross. *The Teaching of Jesus.*" p. 132.)

V.

Present Yet Future.

Jesus taught that the Kingdom is already present yet is to come. "It is a future Kingdom become present, yet not ceasing to be future." In recent years, great prominence has been given to the apocalyptic and prophetic utterances in the Gospels, and it has been suggested that in these the key to the Kingdom teaching of Jesus is to be found. Extremists go so far as to say that Jesus saw the Kingdom as altogether future, supernatural, unconditioned by men's efforts, a Kingdom to be perfected, not by the spread of Christianity, or by the slow progress of the race, but by God's sole and catastrophic act. In this view, Jesus is not the Founder, but simply the Herald, of the Kingdom, calling men, as John did, to penitence and faith which is a preparation for the day when the Kingdom shall be manifest in power.

This idea has not gone unchallenged. In the reaction some have gone to the opposite extreme. They say that the apocalyptic sayings in the Gospels do not represent the mind of the Master, but the effort of the disciples to interpret His mind. The Kingdom, they hold, is the realm in which God is trusted as Father and obeyed as King. They see in the Parables a forecast of slow but sure progress, the victory of the religious and ethical ideals expressed in our Lord's gracious message of the Fatherhood of God and the infinite worth of every human soul.

Jesus saw no inconsistency in the paradox of a Kingdom present yet to come. He said to the Pharisees, " The Kingdom of God is within (or ' among ') you " (Luke xvii. 21) ; to the congregation gathered in the Nazareth synagogue He read of the coming Kingdom, concluding with the words, " To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears " (Luke iv. 17-21). It was of a present good, a present dispensation, that He spoke when He said, " From the days of John the Baptist until now the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and men of violence take it by force " (Matthew xi. 12) ; and also when He threw out the challenge to His critics, " If I by the finger of God cast out devils, then is the Kingdom of God come upon you " (Luke xi. 20). See Luke x. 23, Mark xii. 34.

On the other hand, He taught His disciples to anticipate a future consummation. The Kingdom teaching of Jesus directs the thought of men to " the dawning manifestation of a new world-order . . a transformation of the entire known universe." The phrase " Kingdom of Heaven " may signify an order which is already existent above, only waiting to be transplanted to earth. Jesus taught His disciples to pray, " Thy Kingdom come." He spoke of a time when " the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father " (Matthew xiii. 43). (See also Luke xiii. 28, Matthew xxv. 34.) On the occasion of the institution of the Lord's Supper, the Saviour said, " I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come " (Luke xxii. 18).

Jesus taught that the given element—the King-

dom—is a present good to be fully realised when He shall come in power. Eternal life is a present possession, reaching out into the future all unknown.

VI.

The Church and the Kingdom.

We have seen that the Kingdom long foretold and eagerly awaited came by Jesus Christ. Beginning at the point of Jewish expectation, He proclaimed dominion which, though not less actual, far outstripped the highest ideals of man.

For the founding and increase of this Kingdom Jesus created a society wherein the life of faith and love should find expression in worship, fellowship and service. He said little about ecclesiastical polity, forms of church government, ritual for public worship, or formulæ of binding creed. He called men to Himself, communicated to them His Spirit, commissioned them for a world-embracing ministry, and so started a society on its eventful career, leaving it to His followers to live out in all simplicity and sincerity His gracious and glorious purpose for mankind.

On two occasions He referred to this community as a church, an *ecclesia*. This word does not in the New Testament signify what it has come to mean for our generation, a highly organised institution with hierarchy and laws. It meant simply an assembly, congregation or community. The Master's references to it are suggestive rather than determinative.

In Matthew xvi. 18, 19, we find the significant words, "I will build My Church." On Peter, as voicing the conviction that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God—on that rock Christ builds. To Peter are given "the keys," the honour and privilege of opening doors; first to the Jews (Acts ii. 14, 37-42), then to Samaritans (Acts viii. 5, 14-17), and finally to Gentiles (Acts x. 19, 20, 44-48). The only "primacy" of Peter of which the New Testament speaks is "primacy" of service. In leadership and authority he was soon eclipsed by one who sought no pre-eminence—the Apostle Paul.

The Church thus founded was entrusted with the right and duty of upholding the law of its own being, and of purging itself of all that might repudiate the principles on which its fellowship was founded. In Matthew xviii. 15-18, Jesus speaks of the art of reconciliation among Christian brethren, and the part which the Christian community as a whole must play to effect this necessary end. The congregation must be ready, should need arise, to exercise the kindliest and strictest discipline. The atmosphere is not that of the law-courts but of the household, "the household of God," where men have about them the warmth of human fellowship, the peace and order and discipline of home.

The descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost related the Church to the Kingdom, and the scattering of its members through the persecution that arose after Stephen's death caused them to realise a unity in Christ unbroken by any separation. The little family gathered together in the Upper Room in Jerusalem grew and spread, its organisation being

of the simplest; the gateway being Baptism; the rallying-point, the Lord's Supper; the main business, prayer, and the task, world-conquest.

The Church as we know it cannot be identified with the Kingdom. As Jesus Himself foretold, tares are found among the wheat; all who are in the membership of the visible Church are not of it. Others who do not claim membership are yet in living fellowship with the Head, though such a position is not countenanced by the New Testament. The relation of the Church to the Kingdom is perhaps best illustrated in Paul's charge to the Elders of the Ephesus Church, gathered to meet him at Miletus (Acts xx. 28). There the Apostle describes the Christian community as God's Church purchased with His precious blood. "The passage combines in a remarkable degree the three elements in the Divine society, namely, the redeemed congregation of Israel (Psalm lxxiv. 2), the Kingdom or *ecclesia* of Messiah (Matthew xvi. 18), and the body established on the Atonement (Colossians i. 20-22, Ephesians ii. 13). All three notes are present in the teaching of the Epistles concerning the *ecclesia*."

"What then," asks F. G. Peabody (*Jesus Christ and the Social Question*, p. 118) "is the place of the Christian Church in the modern world? It is not a place where correctness of opinion is guarded and maintained; not a cold-storage warehouse for uncorrupted truth; not merely a place of religious utterance, or of religious symbolism, or a gymnasium of ritual for the calisthenics of the soul. It is, to use the language of modern life, a 'power-house,' where there is generated a supply of spiritual energy

sufficient to move the world with wisdom, courage and peace. Let this power fail, and a Church stands in the midst of modern life without an adequate reason for its existence, a Sunday club, an entertainment bureau, a survival of the days when religion was real. A living Church communicates power." The Church is the Body of Christ at work in the world for the extension of His Kingdom.

"We thank Thee that Thy Church unsleeping
While earth rolls onward into light
Through all the world her watch is keeping,
And rests not now by day or night.

So be it, Lord, Thy throne shall never,
Like earth's proud empires, pass away;
But stand, and rule, and grow for ever,
Till all Thy creatures own Thy sway."

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE HEREAFTER.

1.	THE COMMON CONVICTION	John xi. 20-24.
2.	SHADOWS	Isaiah xiv. 4-10.
3.	LIGHT	2 Timothy i. 6-10.
4.	HEAVEN	John xiv. 1-6.
5.	RECOGNITION	Luke ix. 28-36.
6.	HELL	Matthew xviii. 7-10.

CHAPTER XI.

LIFE HEREAFTER.

I.

The Common Conviction.

The teaching of the New Testament is that the full realisation of the Kingdom of God lies beyond this world-order. This raises for us the issue of the life hereafter. Are we immortal, or are we merely delicately compounded matter—dust to dust returning? This question is of vital importance, since it concerns the present as well as the future. Henry David Thoreau's motto, "One world at a time," is not so wise as at first sight it seems, for, *if* we are immortal, life should be viewed in its true perspective, and lived in the light of eternity.

Some say that "the conviction of immortality is not so universal that it can be called a natural instinct of humanity. There have always been those to whom the survival of the individual has seemed a delusion." They would probably sing with Swinburne,

> "From too much love of living,
> From hope and fear set free,
> We thank with brief thanksgiving
> Whatever gods there be,
> That no life lives for ever,
> That dead men rise up never,
> That even the weariest river,
> Winds somewhere to the sea."

On such a view, life can scarcely be said to be a high adventure; it is simply a pilgrimage to the cinder heap; it is not an opportunity of creating personality or achieving character with abiding values, simply a gradual return to nothingness.

Against such a view we have to set the prevalence and persistence of the belief in immortality. It is a living issue of our time. Recently, Dean W. R. Matthews made this the subject of a series of broadcast lectures; he had no less than nineteen hundred letters in reply. Belief in some sort of existence after death is as old and as universal as religion itself. It is found in every part of the world, in every age, and among men of every variety of culture.

This is a fact to be reckoned with. Tennyson made this deduction, "If you allow a God, and God allows this strong instinct and universal yearning for another life, surely that is in a measure a presumption of its truth—we cannot give up the mighty hopes that make us men." Dr. E. W. Barnes makes the same point when he says: "The ground-plan of the universe is unreasonable if there is implanted in us a burning desire to know its mysteries, and we are none the less fated to perish in ignorance."

II.

Shadows.

St. Paul was awaiting martyrdom when he wrote his second letter to Timothy. He was face to face with the stern fact of death when he said "... our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and

hath brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel" (i. 10). The verb "brought to light" implies that before the advent of Christ "life and immortality" were shadowy and unsubstantial guesses, hopes, aspirations, rather than solid realities. That exactly represents the situation.

Thousands of years before, the ancient Egyptians regarded immortality an axiom of life. Through changing eras they made abundant and elaborate provision by magical texts and amulets for escape from "the many and varied perils of the tomb and the other world." The earliest literature of the Aryan race shows a like deep and abiding interest. Indian thought throughout the centuries has envisaged a future "in which the soul passes from shape to shape, wears out body after body, and works out its retribution in a hopeless struggle with its demerit, in a perpetual effort to burst the mesh of existence." The ancestor worship of China involves the belief in continued existence, though the state of the dead is not conceived with any definiteness. A sensuous imagination runs riot in the doctrine of Islam.

The early Greeks dreaded the vagueness and shadowiness of Hades, the underworld. It was bereft of light, and was without form and void. Plato's touch of genius did much to lead Greek thought away from superstition to philosophy. He did not reject the common intuition, but sought to "comfort the child within us who had these fears." He argued that the soul by its very nature is indissoluble, that when such a soul as Socrates arrived in the next world it would be well with him, a thought to comfort the philosopher and his disciples perhaps, but without

much cheer for the ordinary man. Plato also taught moral retribution. Indeed, his teaching reached the highest point attained by any before the coming of Christ, save for the truth revealed in Old Testament Scriptures.

These Scriptures have little to say about immortality. For the most part, the Old Testament thought of survival is expressed in the dark word *Sheol*. This represented a region, to which the grave was the entrance, the opposite of the upper sphere of light and life. The personalities there were feeble and flaccid, with consciousness enough to recognise each other—there, enemies co-mingled, but finding it "a land of forgetfulness." There was no distinction of good and evil; all connection with the world was broken off; and, saddest of all, the relation between the dead and God was cut off. "In death there is no remembrance of Thee; in Sheol who shall give Thee thanks?" Mid the gloom of the O.T. there are occasional points of light: e.g., Psalms 73 and 139, also Isaiah 26. The hope of the saint was to escape Sheol, to miss it, and find life. (*cf.* Psalm 49). Until the fullness of time was come, the world in its thought of immortality lay, if not in darkness, certainly in deep shadows.

III.

LIGHT.

What difference did the coming of Jesus make to men's thought on this problem? All the difference between sunshine and shadow. Where prophet

and poet and philosopher had blindly groped their way, He moved with sure step; He spake with authority. We marvel at the restraint manifest in His teaching. He came from God and was going to God; He knew; but He did little to gratify the curiosity, or encourage the speculation, or fire the imagination of His hearers. He said little about the city that lieth foursquare, whose foundations are precious stones, whose walls are jasper, and whose streets are gold. He spoke about God, not as a God of the dead, but of the living. He taught that He is our Father, in character just and holy, loving and merciful. He spoke about man, of his values, his reach, and his possible affinities. Such teaching had been sheer mockery, unless man is immortal.

He Himself had power over death, so possessed was He by God. On the first recorded occasion, He called a maid to life who was just dead; called her with the same tenderness, with the same word, as a mother calls her child out of sleep. On the next occasion, it was a young man He bade arise—a widow's only son, who was being carried to the burial. Lazarus was full grown, known and respected in Bethany, and perhaps in Jerusalem. He had been dead four days, when the stone was rolled from the tomb, and Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." This miracle, so wonderful in the eyes of Jesus' friends, finally settled in the hearts of His enemies the urgent necessity for action leading to His death. The value of these miracles is that they demonstrate that the thought of Jesus clearly was that those who die have not ceased to live—they sleep.

Jesus Himself became obedient unto death, even

the death of the Cross. This truth has a tremendous bearing on the Christian doctrine of immortality, We cannot know, or hope to know, what death meant to Jesus, when, as Lamb of God, He took away the sins of the world. It was so terrible even to contemplate, in its tragedy and suffering, that it caused the courageous Christ to agonise in prayer, saying, " My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from Me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." One factor strengthening the faith of Jesus is described as " the joy that was set before Him." Many have sought to describe that joy, but surely underlying it was the conviction of immortality, the assurance that love is mightier than death, that eternal life is life through death.

For the disciples, the supreme evidence of immortality was the fact of the Resurrection and the experience of the indwelling Christ in their souls. Had Jesus ascended from the Mount of Transfiguration without seeing death, without tasting death for every man, it must have seemed as wonderful to His followers as seemed the death of Moses to the pilgrim nation at Nebo. It would have brought them no assurance of immortality. The Resurrection and the post-Resurrection appearances and fellowship, the Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit, these were the facts which illumined the minds and warmed the hearts of the disciples, lifting them out of their disappointment and dejection, and making them men. The new conviction wrought life in them, delivering them from bondage to fear of death, enabling them to refuse deliverance when deliverance meant apostasy, enlarging their horizons, inspiring

their service and leading them out in triumph to victory.

As the Easter miracle became a personal experience, and men rose from their dead past and from death in trespasses and sins to newness of life, they realised for themselves that Jesus Christ had brought life and immortality to light—the very life of the Eternal which is the earnest and guarantee of our immortality. "The final assurance of immortality is not an argument of the mind; it is a conviction of the heart—the experience of a life already victorious over the tyranny of earth. It is reached through faith by those who will trust Christ and let that experience bring its own conclusions" (James Reid, *The Victory of God*, p. 63).

Therefore, we do not plead as our last word the nature of the soul; belief in personal values—truth, holiness, love; or a future life as required to redress the injustices of the life that now is, and allow for the fulfilment of love and all creative enterprise. Such lines of proof are helpful but not unanswerable. Our argument is, life which has at the heart of it the values of the Eternal, Christ in us, the hope of glory. This means for us, as it meant for our Saviour, life through death. By His death we live; dying, we live. Ours is the life realised when self is crucified. "If any man will come after Me," Jesus said, "let Him deny himself, take up the cross, and follow Me." He who knows that life will require no aid from science or spiritism, from philosophy or comparative religion to convince him of immortality; he has the witness within.

So with the Apostle Paul we give thanks unto

Jesus Christ, who is become our Saviour, since His love was aggressive against every form of sin, proving itself mighty even to bring to nought the last enemy, Death. The Gospel that Jesus died and rose again, and now seeks to live His life in us, banishes for all who love Him the gloom which through the weary centuries surrounded the thought of death and Hades. Death, stripped of its power, becomes our servant, opening the door to larger life and fuller fellowship beyond.

IV.

Heaven.

Preaching in 1880, Paxton Hood said, " When we were children, scarcely a sermon was ever preached which did not deal very largely with motives derived from the hope of heaven or the fear of hell. These topics have passed largely out of discourses . . . Heaven is looked on with little aspiration, and hell with very little dread." This is confirmation of a remark, quoted by Dr. W. R. Maltby, that " the church lost hell forty years ago, and heaven followed ten years later." John Galsworthy, studying the mind of post-War youth, wrote, " The condition of the world is on the nerves of the young. England's dished, they say, Europe's dished, Heaven's dished, and so is Hell."

Certain old-time ideas have certainly gone, ideas which sentimentalised heaven out of its pure ethical quality. Take John Milton's famous lines :

" There entertain him all the saints above
In solemn troops and sweet societies,
That sing, and singing in their glory move,
And wipe the tears forever from his eyes."

This is too soft, too empty of moral values, to represent the final life of the redeemed. We no longer think of heaven as an " elysian clime on the surface of the earth, or a happy isle beyond the setting sun, or some halcyon spot above the firmament, curtained in with splendour and crowded with—with good things." It is not loss but gain that we have put away childish things—dreams of barbaric magnificence, luxurious idleness, and the perpetual monotony of endless song.

Mean motives have mingled with men's thoughts of heaven to destroy its values for them. Where heaven has been thought of as compensation for bad times here, or as a bank guaranteeing compound interest to all eternity for some little deed of kindness done, " religion pollutes morality."

Reaction against traditional ideas is due among others to an awakened social conscience and enthusiasm for social reform. As Dean Inge sees it, " the working man is apt to think that the preacher is trying to put him off with cheques drawn upon the bank of heaven, the currency of which he greatly doubts, in order to persuade him not to claim what he conceives to be his rights here and now " (*Outspoken Essays*, 2nd series, p.34f.).

Whilst traditional ideas have yielded to the pressure of reality, heaven remains. " For clear-thinking ethical natures, for natures such as those of

Jesus and St. Paul, it is a downright necessity to separate heaven and hell as distinctly as possible. It is only ethically worthless speculations that have always tried to minimise the distinction" (Wernle. *Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i. p.286). The all too common thought that Death is a kindly nurse, shepherding all men into some comfortable home at last, since "we are all Jock Tamson's bairns," marks a lapse beneath the teaching of ancient paganism. Eastern thinkers like Gautama Buddha, and Greek poets and philosophers, like Æschylus and Plato, who enjoyed little of the vision of God that we possess, taught the reality of heaven and hell, the connection between act and outcome, between character and destiny.

What is Heaven? Jesus spoke of Himself as the Son of Man who *is* in heaven (John iii. 13; cf. i. 18). In this and similar passages heaven is not thought of as a place. The presence of Jesus in heaven was not local but spiritual. "Fellowship," said William Morris, "is heaven: lack of fellowship is hell." Burns makes the lover to say:

> "O were I in the wildest waste,
> Sae bleak and bare, sae bleak and bare,
> The desert were a paradise,
> If thou wert there, if thou wert there."

Jesus knew the highest heaven, and lived in it while here on earth, because He shared unbroken communion with the Father.

It was this note He stressed, when on the night of His betrayal He spoke of heaven to His disciples.

" In My Father's house are many mansions." Did His mind go back to His first moments in the Temple with its many rooms, to His first glorious hour of fellowship in His Father's house? There He was at home. What gives value to the vision in John xiv. 1-3, what makes the Father's house heaven, is that the Father is there, His children are there, and Christ who is preparing a place for all who love Him is coming again to receive them unto Himself, that where He is, there they may be also; fellowship purest, sweetest, strongest!

If that is what heaven means, then, truly, as Boreham says, " it is a searchingly terrible place." It is not to be won by a trick performed by priest or believer at death. " The fact is that we are only going to heaven when we are becoming heavenly in heart " (*Cf.* Francis Davidson, *The Faith that Lives*, ch. xv.). Heaven is a state of character, a vital relationship with the Father, realised, perhaps but feebly here, through faith in the Son.

" Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." At death we throw off the physical body, so necessary for our early education, and we are clothed upon with our " spiritual body," adapted to its new environment and task. Then not dreamy repose or easy irresponsibility but service is our joy, service according to our ransomed powers, where infinite variety of ministry provides scope for all.

Such a view of heaven makes the veil that separates it from earth wear very thin. With Francis Thompson we feel " heaven and earth jostle each other with a strange intimacy."

" O world invisible, we view thee,
O world intangible, we touch thee,
O world unknowable, we know thee,
Inapprehensible, we clutch thee !

Yes, in the night, my Soul, my daughter
Cry—clinging Heaven by the hems,
And lo, Christ walking on the water
Not of Genesareth but Thames ! "

V.

Recognition.

Such is the desire of the human heart to pry within the veil that not even the most complete exploration of the subject of the Life Hereafter is likely to answer all questions. There is, however, one question prompted by affection rather than mere speculation on which a brief word may be offered— " Shall we know our loved ones in heaven ? " To this the teaching of the New Testament gives no direct answer ; but many words of hope and assurance are in its pages. In heaven, love is perfected. On earth we learn that when Christ takes control He enriches the vital affections which are the very salt of human life. The man who loves Christ will love his children with a finer tenderness. Love is the more enhanced the nearer it comes to its Fountain and Source. The disciples on the Mount of Transfiguration knew Moses and Elias. Stephen, Paul, and John on Patmos knew the glorified form of our Lord in their visions. Nothing valuable or good on earth will be thrown away in heaven, least of all love which

is the essence of fellowship. "The light of that world is Jesus," but in that light, at the break of day, we shall surely know each other.

"We'll meet, and aye be fain,
In the land o' the leal."

VI.

HELL.

One writer boldly asserts that neither Christ nor His disciples say very much about the future of the wicked. It is a strange and solemnising fact, however, that out of His boundless love for man Jesus spoke more of the place of woe than of the realms of bliss. G. A. Studdert Kennedy (*The Wicked Gate*, p. 72) says, "You can only learn the fear of hell through the love of God." In Jesus that love is seen at its highest, and the fear of hell at its keenest. He does not grope or hesitate in speaking on this subject, as all had done before Him and multitudes have done since. He spoke as one who knew; and we do the Kingdom small service if we rob His words of their solemnity or urgency.

This subject also is beset by traditional notions which must be jettisoned, notions which have reduced hell to "a hideous nightmare and an atrocious slander on God." Dean Inge says, "Popular teaching has invested God with our own mercenariness and vindictiveness."

Some complain that

> " They've sell't the guid auld brunstane Hell,"

believing that

> " The fear o' Hell's a hangman's whip
> To haud the wretch in order ; "

but who will maintain that that is the spirit or teaching of Jesus Christ ?

In 1930, a symposium, having for its contributors eminent theologians, scientists, and writers, was published on the subject, " What is the Real Hell ! " (Cassell). There is, of course, diversity of expression, as there is diversity of outlook ; but on one point there is surprising unanimity—all believe in Hell ! They define it variously. A theologian describes it as an intense sense of what the deprivation of God means ; a novelist, as the realisation of one's failure ; a King's Counsel, as the condition or state of the spirit suffering the agony of remorse for wrong done, and good left undone, in this life.

There are multitudes around us who ask no definition : they know. " When I used to walk about the slums in which I worked, passing from house to house among broken and despairing women, hundreds of whom had taken to drink, and when I get near to the heart of the West End of London with its drugs and its prostitution, I murmur to myself : ' They lie in hell like sheep, and death gnaweth upon them.' " So wrote Studdert Kennedy. Think of the prostitute who said : " Don't talk to me of hell. I have been there for years."

" The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others ;
Oh, burning hell ! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash."

(*Burns*).

Current views regarding the future of the wicked fall into three categories. (For a brief summary with proof texts see R.H. Coats, *The Christian Life*, p. 31f.).

(a) *Universalism*, which declares that all created souls must necessarily be brought to the knowledge and love of God in another world.

(b) *Conditional Immortality*, which teaches that the mercy of God in Christ will extend beyond this life to all whom it may reach and influence. Such as still persist in alienating themselves from the life of God may be permitted to drop out of existence altogether.

(c) *Endless Punishment*.—Principal Salmond (*The Christian Doctrine of Immortality*) : concludes : " Christ's own teaching gives the significance of finality to the moral decision of the present life. If there are possibilities of change, forgiveness, relaxation of penalty, or cessation of punishment in the future life, His words at least do not reveal them. His recorded sayings nowhere suggest the provision of ministeries of grace, whether new or continued, in the after-existence. They bring the two events, death and judgment into relation, and give no disclosure of an intermediate state with untold potentialities of Divine love and human surrender. Such is the testimony which an unprejudiced exegesis has to offer : " but he finally adds, " Yet Christ's words are

words of grace, and His doctrine is a revelation of life."

If we must choose between *Universalism,* which has no warrant in the Word of God, and *Conditional Immortality* which regards immortality as something accidental, appended to a man's nature after he believes in Christ, and *Everlasting Punishment* which seems to be the emphatic declaration of Scripture, we must say with Dr. Johnson, " I do not forget the merits of my Redeemer ; but my Redeemer has said that He will set some on His right hand and some on His left." He will pronounce sentence on none who do not freely and deliberately pronounce it themselves. Our doubts and difficulties we must leave with Him whose nature and whose name is Love.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.

1.	PILGRIMAGE	1 Corinthians xiii.
2.	HAS HE COME AGAIN? ...	Phil. iii. 17-21.
3.	MARANATHA	Titus ii. 6-14.
4.	JUDGMENT	Romans ii. 3-16.
5.	FINAL TRIUMPH	Colossians i. 16-23.
6.	DOXOLOGY	Jude 24, 25.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF CHRIST.

I.

PILGRIMAGE.

IT was my fortune as a lad to come under the influence of an excellent teacher, who searched the Scriptures and made a special study of "things to come." His enthusiasm infected me. I saw with wonder texts gathered from all parts of Scripture and dove-tailed in workmanlike fashion into a plan of the ages. I learned a new vocabulary, studied illustrated charts, and found delight in speculation whetted by curiosity to peer within the veil which hides the future from our eyes.

Then came disillusionment. I discovered that there was no unanimity, or possibility of unanimity, among students of apocalyptic. Their differences reached beyond ornamentation and superstructure to the very foundations. Teachers went on inventing charts which differed one from another not only in glory but in content. Proof texts, I found, were torn from their context without regard to primary meaning or purpose, a use of Scripture which is neither intelligent nor reverent, savouring more of the desire to get a twig of the burning bush than of attention to hear the Voice.

Weary of speculation and mere feeding upon wind, I would have given up ; but was recalled by the

fact that no student can do that and be faithful. There is in the New Testament a body of truth, which may not be ignored simply because it is not easy. If I do not compare pre-millenial and post-millenial views, or discuss the "rapture," the "anti-christ" and the "Man of Sin," it is not because I do not see these in apocalyptic, but because the kernel is more important than the husk. The kernel is the Second Advent.

II.

Has He Come Again?

There are many who do not relate the Second Coming to the future at all, who point back to historic events—Pentecost, the Fall of Jerusalem, and other crises—in the belief that the promises were fulfilled then. Some hesitate even to recognise promises. They say that the intense expectation of the early Church can be explained as the carry over of Jewish ideas into the Christian faith. But Canon Barry voices the common opinion when he says, "The expectation of the primitive Church is based upon some authentic element in the Master's own thought and teaching" (*Relevance of Christianity*, p. 94).

Those who look back usually plead the text, "There be some standing here, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Kingdom of God" (Luke ix. 27). This makes an unsatisfactory foundation, for, as Plummer says in the *International Critical Commentary*, "the meaning is much disputed." He mentions seven interpretations, and adds, "A direct reference to the *Parousia* is excluded."

(*Parousia* is a technical term, found in Matthew and in the Pauline epistles, for Christ's coming in glory).

Others point to the fact that the expectation is keenest in the first written epistles of St. Paul—1 and 2 Thessalonians; (*cf.* 1 Corinthians vii. 29). There, the speedy return of Christ is anticipated. In his later ministry Paul no longer hopes to witness in his lifetime Christ's appearing; he contemplates death and final union with his Lord (2 Corinthians 1-5; Acts xx. 22-25; Philippians i. 2, 20*f*). Not the coming Christ, so much as the present, indwelling Christ is his theme. It is argued that, as he grew in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, the hope of His coming receded into the background. But, as Sabbatier points out (*The Apostle Paul*, p. 317), "Though he may have relinquished the hope of being present at the *parousia* of the Lord he always expected this event, and wished those who came after him to expect it" (1 Corinthians xv. 22; Philippians i. 10; iii. 20).

Others turn to St. John, in whose Gospel, they say, the coming of the Son of Man, as the triumphant consequence of the Cross, is identified with the gift of the Holy Spirit. But with St. John, as with St. Paul, Christ's Return is "the great mountain peak at the end of the valley." This is clearly seen in the First Epistle. There the *parousia* is spoken of as an event; occurring once for all; affecting simultaneously all mankind; the consummation of all Divine purpose that has governed human existence; the final crisis in the history of the Church, of the world, and of every man (*Cf.* Robert Law, *The Tests of Life*, p. 329).

The case for identifying the *parousia* with the

coming of the Holy Spirit is ably argued in Clarke's *Outline of Christian Theology*, p. 428ff, where he sums up: "No visible return of Christ to the earth is to be expected, but rather the long steady advance of His spiritual kingdom. The expectation of a single dramatic advent corresponds to the Jewish doctrine of the nature of the Kingdom, but not to the Christian. Jews, supposing the kingdom of Messiah to be an earthly reign, would naturally look for the bodily presence of the King; but Christians who know the spiritual nature of the kingdom may well be satisfied with a spiritual presence, mightier than if it were seen. If our Lord will but complete the spiritual coming that He had begun, there will be no need of visible advent to perfect His glory on the earth."

III.

MARANATHA.
("Our Lord Cometh.")

A careful study of the passages relating to the Second Advent shows that Jesus did not always speak of His Coming in the same sense; *e.g.*, such a passage as John xvi. 16, "A little while, and ye shall see Me no more; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me," probably refers to the appearance of Jesus to His disciples immediately after His resurrection: while John xiv. 3, "And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also," may be reasonably explained as a special coming of Christ to meet His disciples, each one at his death.

Jesus did come again to His disciples after the

Resurrection; then in the mission of the Comforter; He came signally in the destruction of Jerusalem, when the Christian Church was finally and decisively liberated from the very possibility of dependance upon Judaism; He came in the power and spread of the Kingdom to which the forecast of Luke ix. 27 probably refers. He has come in every great Day of the Lord—in the Reformation, in the Wesley and other spiritual Revivals which have renewed the Church's youth like the eagle's. (These frequent comings make the technical term, the *Second* Coming, a misnomer).

But when we have allowed for all these appearings, we have in Christ's words the thought which filled so exclusively the minds of the first Christians—the *Personal* Return of Christ. We join with the Church catholic, in its confession, "From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." Dr. Denney wisely said, "We need lay no stress on the scenery of New Testament prophecy . . . but if we are to retain any relation to the New Testament at all, we must assert the personal return of Christ as Judge of all" (*Studies in Theology*, p. 239).

Turning to the teaching of Jesus, we find that the completion of His kingdom requires a new interposition, and that for this He is Himself to come again. The time of His return is not declared. If enthusiasts had but recognised this, and abstained from attempting to forecast the date of the Second Advent, the world would have been saved the sorry spectacle of congregations ascending mountain tops, and individuals giving up their work to wind up their affairs. Such presumption on the part of false

prophets, and such silliness on the part of their dupes, has brought this vital doctrine into disrepute. " Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father " (Matthew xxiv. 36). Christ speaks of His return as an *event*, a visible manifestation. The times must first be ripe for it; when certain events have come to pass then He will return.

St. Paul wrote, " For the grace of God hath appeared, bringing salvation to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; awaiting the blessed hope of the appearing of the glory of the great God and of our Saviour Christ Jesus " (Titus ii. 12, 13). Gwilym O. Griffith (*St. Paul's Life of Christ, p.* 189) says, after surveying the development in the thought of the Apostle concerning this subject, " What we may be sure of in any case is that the Hope itself remained. The world, to Paul, was moving irresistibly toward a Crisis; time was assuredly hasting towards the Day of Christ. For not even the certainty of a living Christ and of a world invisible was enough for Paul. There must be ever before him the assurance of a Return unto judgment and victory."

There is throughout the pages of the New Testament a note of urgency; the coming of the Master will be sudden and unexpected. " Watch, therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh." We cannot but feel about the early Church an air of expectancy. Paul himself was the busiest of missionaries, yet always he seemed as if waiting for an appointed signal. Marcus Dods illustrates the right kind of watchful-

ness. "The fisherman's wife who spends her time on their pierhead watching for the boats cannot be so well prepared to give her husband a comfortable reception as the woman who is busy about her household work, and only now and again turns a longing look seaward" (*The Parables of our Lord*, vol. i. p. 238). *Maran atha*—let that be your conviction—"Our Lord is coming;" *maran atha*—let that be your prayer—"O Lord, come."

IV.

JUDGMENT.

The advent of Christ is to judgment. "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then shall He render unto every man according to his deeds" (Matthew xvi. 27; xiii. 41; xxv. 31). Jesus did not contemplate an eternal balance between right and wrong, an everlasting strife as to which should inherit the earth. The final and universal triumph is with God.

"The comings of Christ in judgment have been frequent in history," Dean Inge says. "The first century, which saw the Incarnation, the rejection of Christ by the Jews, and the ruin of the Jewish State was one of them. Another was the fall of the Western Roman Empire, when Rome was sacked by the Goths, an event which led St. Augustine to write his famous treatise, *Of the City of God*. Another period of destruction was the French Revolution and the Napoleonic War. And we have been living through another . . . In each of these crises there was the death of an old order and the birth of a new."

It is also true for the individual as for the State that judgment is continuous.

> " Every day is Judgment Day.
> Count on no to-morrow.
> He who will not, when he may,
> Act to-day, to-day, to-day,
> Doth but borrow
> Sorrow." (*Oxenham*).

But the Scriptures speak of a day of reckoning, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus. Men shall then stand in the light of truth and know themselves and enter upon a condition for which they have prepared themselves.

Startling is the position claimed by Jesus for Himself—He is Judge. " *The Son of Man* shall come . . . ." He has enshrined in human life the perfect righteousness required of us all, and, therefore, is become our constant Judge. In measure as we are like Him we stand or fall. " It is in the person of Christ that God has been accepted or rejected of men, and it is fit that in this person also men be accepted or rejected of God. The terrible doom of the wicked will therefore not be the ignorant stroke of one who does not know what life on earth is, but the calm decision of One who by His own experience has learned accurately to estimate all that extenuates guilt. Every allowance will be made . . . we shall be judged by One who will look into our eyes and read our soul with His own human eyes and His own human knowledge of men and their ways " (Dods. *Christ and Man*, p. 299f.).

The principle of separation is the relation in

which those who are judged stand to Jesus Himself. Much of His message is in parable or apocalypse, but this should not blind us to the fact that it represents something very real and very fearful. "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Corinthians v. 19; *cf.* Romans ii. 3-16; 1 Corinthians iii. 13; iv. 3). Our attitude to Christ is reflected in character, especially in its deepest principle—love. Have we discharged the common charities of life? In the memorable parable of Matthew 25, all nations—even the Gentiles—are gathered before the King. "Their destiny is determined by their acceptance or rejection of Him in the persons of those who needed their services of love." Profession and externalism then avail nothing. If "fellowship is heaven," then the King's "Depart from Me, I never knew you," is hell.

There is a presentation of the Gospel which urges men to make a friend of the Judge. If this means admitting Christ into the life so that He rules there, and inspires for life and service, it is well. If the suggestion is that, by formal religion or mere outward confession, we can bias the Judge in our favour, we are perilously near blasphemy of the worst sort.

> "O how shall I, whose native sphere
> Is dark, whose mind is dim,
> Before the Ineffable appear,
> And on my naked spirit bear
> The uncreated beam?

There is a way for man to rise
To that sublime abode :—
An offering and a sacrifice,
A Holy Spirit's energies,
An Advocate with God.

T. Binney.

V.

Final Triumph.

" One God, one law, one element ;
And one far-off divine event
To which the whole creation moves."

Tennyson, In Memoriam.

To poet and prophet has been given to see " that through the ages one increasing purpose runs." St. Paul interprets it as the perfected reign of Christ. He foresees the time when " in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father " (Philippians ii. 9*ff.*) " It was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell ; and through Him to reconcile all things unto Himself, having made peace through the blood of His Cross " (Colossians i. 19). The same lofty idea is found in Ephesians i. 9*f.*, " . . . to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth ; in Him, I say . . . ."

Words cannot describe, or reason grasp, the content of the glory of the consummation of all things in Christ ; but it is clear that His triumph will be seen in the lives that are " ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven " and translated to be for ever with the Lord. The work of grace does not end this side of time.

The believer receives a "spiritual body," celestial and incorruptible. For it is the will of God that he be conformed to the image of His Son. This means moral and spiritual likeness, and likeness also in respect of His glorious body.

How are the dead raised? At death, the body perishes, but the personality, retaining its identity and all the values of character "gravitates" to its real centre—Christ. It is clothed with the new spiritual body, which is adapted to its new environment. The nearest and happiest analogy is given by St. Paul: "thou sowest not the body which shall be, but a bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other kind; but God giveth it a body, even as it pleaseth Him, and to each seed a body of its own." This allows for conformity to type in the highest degree. Assimilation begun on earth is perfected. Thus these individual lives of ours are "gathered up in Christ."

The final triumph of Christ is seen further in the perfecting of the Church, and the consummation of the Kingdom. Old racial barriers between Jew and Gentile have been for ever swept away; they do not survive death. The Church will be organised into a glorious and immortal unity, and will find its perfect blessedness in Christ. Those who say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me," will realise then that the Christ who lives in them binds them as kinsmen. The fellowship of the redeemed will find its supreme unity in the Redeemer, when the obscurities and misunderstandings of earth are swept away, and we see our Lord face to face.

The final triumph of Christ will be seen further

in His Government of the Universe. The ruin wrought by sin and the redemption wrought by Christ are co-extensive; in the dispensation of the fullness of times it is God's purpose to bring all things again into unity. Professor Riddell wrote recently, "Our civilization and the structure of society as we know it belong to the temporal, not the eternal, order. They may be overthrown, but faith will not be destroyed along with them . . . There may be no end to the conflict until the consummation of all things in Christ, but faith holds the conviction that, in some fashion and at some hour, the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them will pass away, and history will end in the assured triumph of Christ."

The Christian doctrine carries with it the idea of a glorifying even of outward nature. Creation itself will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. What this means we cannot tell. "There is a reconciliation of all things, both on earth and in the heavens; a reconsecration of the universe, as of a temple that sin had profaned." He that sitteth on the throne saith, "Behold I make all things new."

VI.

Doxology.

NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO DO EXCEEDING ABUNDANTLY ABOVE ALL THAT WE ASK OR THINK, ACCORDING TO THE POWER THAT WORKETH IN US, UNTO HIM BE GLORY IN THE CHURCH BY CHRIST JESUS THROUGHOUT ALL AGES, WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN."

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